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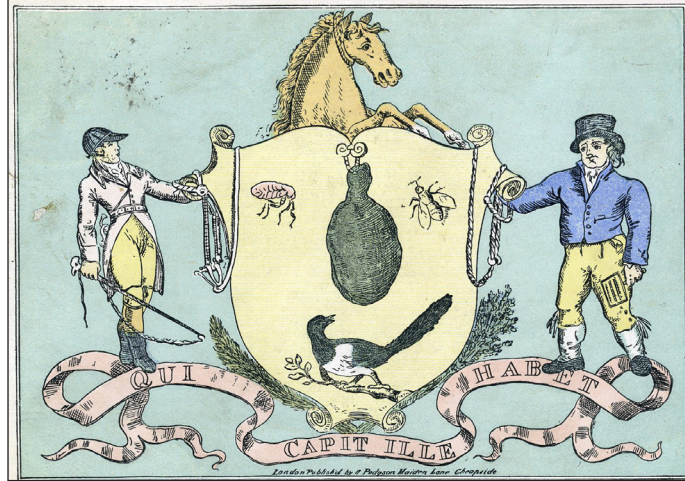
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# The creation of Yorkshireness



Cultural identities in Yorkshire c.1850-1918

**WILLIAM MARSHALL**

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**The University of Huddersfield**

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# Abstract

THE rapid expansion, wider distribution and increased readership of print media in the latter half of the nineteenth century helped to foster the process that has been described as the nationalisation of English culture. In a parallel process, however, the same media could also be deployed to construct and to propagate regional cultures and identities. This thesis, concentrating on the period c.1850-1918, uses Yorkshire as a case study. The employment of county boundaries and structures as a delimitation for historical research can be questioned. But it is defensible in the case of the cultural study of a county that, in spite of its size, heterogeneity and industrial transformation, had acquired a set of identities and stereotypes which evolved during the early-modern period and were retained, refined and celebrated in the industrial age. Although it had no political basis, Yorkshireness remained a powerful sub-identity within England, the United Kingdom and the wider British world.

By examining the newspaper press, weekly periodicals, dialect almanacs and regional fiction, the thesis explores the evolution and the dissemination of Yorkshire's cultural identity in an age of popular print. There is also an analysis of attempts to find a deterministic basis for Yorkshire character and a description of county societies in the UK and overseas. The evolution of folkloristic Yorkshire identities and symbols is traced, and illustrated dialect postcards of the early-twentieth century are analysed, on the grounds that they were a widely-transmitted source of Yorkshire stereotypes.

Individuals who played a role in the construction of Yorkshireness include the writer James Burnley, the folklorist and humorist Richard Blakeborough, the novelists Halliwell Sutcliffe and William Riley, the dialect writers Charles Rogers and John Hartley, the cartoonist Arthur North and the University of Leeds academic Professor Frederic Moorman, who conceived the project for eisteddfod equivalents in Yorkshire. The conclusion is that Victorian and Edwardian print media and illustrated ephemera were used extensively to construct and convey a sense of Yorkshireness, acting as a countervailing force to the tendency towards nationalisation of culture, and that in the absence of a fully negotiated concept of universal Englishness, county identity was an important factor at home and overseas.

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# Introduction

## Countervailing forces to the nineteenth-century 'nationalisation of culture'

IN 1881, a Bradford periodical carried a series of articles by a special correspondent who had visited Egypt. He encountered an American, who said, 'Guess you're a Britisher', to which the special correspondent replied, 'No, I'm a Yorkshireman'.<sup>1</sup> The overall tone of the article was humorous and the correspondent's retort was probably intended to be in the same vein. But readers of a magazine entitled *The Yorkshireman* would have smiled with recognition. Perhaps they were sometimes inclined to identify themselves in the same way. At the very least, the passage is a fragment that can be added to the evidence for multiplicity of identities within the United Kingdom, within Great Britain, within England and for that matter within 'Greater Britain'. The study of national identities and character has burgeoned, derived from such diverse texts as Linda Colley's *Britons* (1992) and Peter Mandler's *The English National Character* (2006),<sup>2</sup> and in the context of England there have been explorations of sub-identities, including several that analyse the North-South divide and Northern regionalism.<sup>3</sup> The North-East has been well served by research that stemmed from the AHRC-funded Research Centre for North-East England History.<sup>4</sup> This thesis represents a further sub-division, being an examination of the county of Yorkshire's cultural identity – I have adopted the term 'Yorkshireness' – and how it was constructed, adapted and diffused in a period roughly bounded by the half century from 1850.

It is argued that this was a formative period, because a combination of factors, including the removal of the 'taxes on knowledge', improved technology, communications and distribution plus increased literacy rates, resulted in new levels of popular print culture. It might be that this helped to foster the late-century process described as the nationalisation of English culture.<sup>5</sup> However, it is possible to identify a parallel process, whereby developments in communications and new media could be deployed to enhance the awareness and adoption of regional cultures and differences. 'Yorkshire did not know it

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1 'Our Special Correspondent in Egypt', *The Yorkshireman*, 12 March 1881.

2 Mandler has, however, warned historians about the over-casual use of the concept of national identities in 'What is "National Identity?" Definitions and applications in modern British historiography', *Modern Intellectual History*, 3, 2 (2006), 271-297.

3 For example, Helen M. Jewell, *The North-South Divide: The Origins of Northern Consciousness in England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994); Stuart Rawnsley, 'Constructing "The North": space and a sense of place' in N. Kirk (ed.), *Northern Identities* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Dave Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); Dave Russell, 'Culture and the formation of northern English identities from c.1850' in B. Lancaster, D. Newton, N. Vall (eds), *An Agenda for Regional History* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Northumbria University Press, 2007); C. Dellheim, 'Imagining England: Victorian Views of the North', *Northern History*, XXII (1986), 216-30; J. Langton, 'The Industrial Revolution and the Regional Geography of England', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 9 (1984), 145-167.

4 Adrian Green and A.J. Pollard, 'Identifying Regions' in Adrian Green and A.J. Pollard (eds), *Regional Identities in North East England, 1300-2000* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007).

5 José Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain, 1870-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp.19-21.

was Yorkshire, nor Somerset Somerset, until the frequent travel made possible by improved communications showed Yorkshiremen and Somersetmen other counties, so that they realised how different was their own,' wrote the novelist and critic Phyllis Bentley.<sup>6</sup> More recently, John Langton has argued that industrialisation enhanced rather than undermined regional distinctiveness. He allows that modern communications eventually took their toll on regionally distinct cultures, but also shows that the latter flourished for a substantial period of the nineteenth century, when 'regional cultural consciousness and cohesion reached its zenith'.<sup>7</sup> This argument has been widely accepted and refined. For example, Stuart Rawnsley writes that, 'far from negating regional economies and cultures, the "Industrial Revolution" actually intensified them'.<sup>8</sup>

The conceptual framework of this thesis is to illustrate this process of regional cultural delineation and enhancement at work in latter-nineteenth century Yorkshire and to show that it was still observable in the early decades of the twentieth century. An end point of 1918 was chosen, partly because this allowed the analysis of some material by the dialect scholar and writer F.W. Moorman, whose ideas about Yorkshire culture had been taking shape since the early 1900s, but it also provided an opportunity to demonstrate that regional identities not only remained intact during the First World War, but were an active ingredient of the wartime sense of nationhood.

The thesis also makes a contribution to the Yorkshire element of the 'genealogy of Northern stereotyping', as Dave Russell has described it.<sup>9</sup> He has also made a call for detailed research projects on provincial press, books, pamphlets and magazines.<sup>10</sup> This thesis is something of a response, and Russell's work has furnished several sources and potential lines of enquiry. The thesis ranges fairly widely, in chapters that examine the newspaper press, weekly periodicals, dialect almanacs and regional novels. There is also an analysis of attempts to find a deterministic basis for the Yorkshire character and a chapter which explores the formation of Yorkshire societies in the UK and overseas. These associations serve to confirm that a sense of Yorkshireness was something that could be retained and exported to 'Greater Britain'.

A key chapter deals with the evolution of folkloristic Yorkshire identities and symbols, including the shifting stereotype of the 'Tyke', and the Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms, which was widely adopted, although it had originated as a satire. It will be shown that stereotypes with rural, pre-industrial origins and which were arguably trans-class in nature, migrated to the newly industrialised areas of Yorkshire, where they were adopted with enthusiasm. Illustrated dialect postcards are analysed, on the grounds that they were a highly popular and widely-transmitted source of Yorkshire stereotypes, helping to reinforce as well as disseminate. A *dramatis personae* emerges, consisting of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century literary and artistic individuals who played a prominent role in the construction of Yorkshireness. They include the prolific writer James Burnley, the folklorist

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6 Phyllis Bentley, *The English Regional Novel* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1941), p.12.

7 Langton, 'Industrial Revolution and the Regional Geography of England', 164.

8 Rawnsley, 'Constructing "The North"' p.6. See also Pat Hudson, *The Industrial Revolution* (London: Edward Arnold, 1992), p.106.

9 Russell, *Looking North*, p.33.

10 Russell, 'Culture and the formation of northern English identities', p.280.

and humorist Richard Blakeborough, the novelists Halliwell Sutcliffe and William Riley, the dialect writers Charles Rogers and John Hartley, the cartoonist Arthur North, and the University of Leeds academic Professor Frederic Moorman, who conceived the project for an equivalent to the Welsh eisteddfod in Yorkshire. Their work and that of others leads to the broad conclusion that Victorian and Edwardian print media, plus illustrated ephemera, were used extensively to construct and convey a sense of Yorkshireness, acting as a countervailing force to the tendency towards nationalisation of culture.

It is also argued that in the absence of a fully negotiated concept of universal Englishness, some form of regional identity was an important factor at home and overseas. In the case of Yorkshire this was a county identity, but the legitimacy of using the county as a basis for historical research needs to be addressed. J.D. Marshall persuasively argues against using ‘ancient administrative units’ as the delimitation for research, especially in fields such as economic and social history.<sup>11</sup> Arguing for the distinct identity of the East Riding of Yorkshire, David Neave also suggests that the county unit is unsuitable for the purposes of cultural history.<sup>12</sup> In the same volume, Edward Royle describes Yorkshire as a ‘notoriously difficult case study’, the regional status of which is ‘more frequently asserted than demonstrated or explained’. The county’s boundaries are ‘neither consistent nor logical and certainly do not embrace a single, unified region,’ Royle states, but he adds that ‘if Yorkshire folk feel a reality... that feeling can become a historical “fact” as much as any river or mountain range... Yorkshire as an idea persists like the grin on the face of the cat’.<sup>13</sup> This can be deployed as a somewhat grudging argument in favour of research into Yorkshireness as a cultural construct. Further encouragement can be derived from the concepts devised by Charles Phythian-Adams. He is dismissive of ‘less-expressive’ subdivisions of the country, such as the North or the West Country, and uses geographical formulae based on factors such as river systems to devise 14 ‘cultural provinces’. One of these is ‘Yorkshire Ouse’ and while it is not identical to the traditional, if fluctuating boundaries of Yorkshire – parts of it are lost to his ‘North’ and ‘Irish Sea’ provinces – the great bulk of the county remains intact. This is, according to the author, the only instance in which a historic county and a ‘cultural province’ are essentially synonymous.<sup>14</sup>

The size of Yorkshire, plus its geographical, social, dialectal and industrial heterogeneity must be acknowledged. But despite this, a sense of pan-Yorkshireness can be identified in the nineteenth century. It emerges in a variety of ways and is not entirely dependent on the later-century surge of enthusiasm for the exploits of the county cricket team. An eccentric instance is the manner in which the character of John Browdie, created by Charles Dickens for *Nicholas Nickleby* after an encounter with an attorney in the far north west of Yorkshire, was adopted throughout the county as a universal archetype. The fact

11 J. D. Marshall, ‘Proving Ground or the Creation of Regional Identity? The Origins and Problems of Regional History in Britain’, in P. Swan and D. Foster (eds), *Essays in Regional and Local History* (Beverly: Hutton Press, 1992).

12 David Neave, ‘The identity of the East Riding of Yorkshire’ in E. Royle and J. D. Marshall (eds), *Issues of Regional Identity: In Honour of John Marshall* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

13 Edward Royle, ‘Regions and identities’ in Royle and Marshall (eds), *Issues of Regional Identity*, pp.6-7.

14 C. Phythian-Adams, *Societies, Cultures, and Kinship, 1580-1850: Cultural Provinces and English Local History* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), esp pp.9-12. See also C. Phythian-Adams, ‘Frontier Valleys’ in J. Thirsk (ed.), *The English Rural Landscape* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2000).

that the majority of migrants to the expanding industrial cities of Yorkshire were from adjacent rural areas – Middlesbrough being a highly significant exception – resulted in the transmission and retention of stereotypes which, as I will show, had been evolving for several centuries. In the context of a cultural study of Yorkshireness and the evolution of stereotypes that still have purchase today, the county is a legitimate unit.

Apart from the fact that a heavy concentration on texts and language implies an element of post-modernism, the thesis is not written under a particular theoretical aegis. But opportunities are taken at various junctures to relate findings to historiographical debates, such as theories of ‘otherness’ and ‘gentrification’ and the debate over whether Victorian texts such as periodicals should be seen as reflective or constructive.<sup>15</sup> In the course of this thesis a fairly conventional tri-partite understanding of class, divided according to economic status, source of income or nature of employment, is used. This is in accordance with the understanding of class that became prevalent during the nineteenth century itself.<sup>16</sup> This does not signify a lack of appreciation of intra-class distinctions nor the ongoing debate on the nature and the usefulness of class as a means of categorisation during the period.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, one of the contentions of the thesis will be that a regional cultural identity, expressed largely via print media, had the power to transcend class or at least filter through its various strata, so that a member of the gentry could be taken to typify or exhibit Yorkshireness almost to the same extent as a dialect-speaking weaver. Yorkshire during the nineteenth century was a proving ground for many of developments in the nature and construction of class that have been identified or explored by historians. The county would furnish E.P. Thompson for much of the data for ‘The Making of the English Working Class’. Its factory-based industrialisation permitted the development of the new horizontal social groups, identified by Harold Perkin. On the other hand, the county’s large rural areas would have allowed the continuance of his ‘vertical interest pyramids’.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, urbanisation and civic politics in centres such as Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield created the spatial conditions for the creation of a newly-defined middle class.<sup>19</sup> Any sustained reading of nineteenth-century material will show that a conception of class, often quite a rigid one, was central to the period. But other identities are also evident, so that class, while it cannot be discarded, was, at the most, a first-among-equals when it came to social identity.

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15 Debated in, for example, Lyn Pykett, ‘Reading the Periodical Press: Text and Content’, in Laurel Brake, Aled Jones, Lionel Madden (eds), *Investigating Victorian Journalism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990); Louis James, ‘The trouble with Betsy: periodicals and the common reader in mid-nineteenth century England’ in Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff (eds), *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982); Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

16 Martin Hewitt, ‘Class and the Classes’ in Chris Williams (ed.), *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), p.318.

17 Founding texts in this debate include Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) and Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: industrial England and the question of class, 1848-1914* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991). For a summary of the debate see Hewitt, ‘Class and the Classes’, p.317, and for a compromise position see R. McWilliam, *Popular Politics in Nineteenth Century England* (London: Routledge, 1998), p.99.

18 Harold Perkin, *Origins of Modern English Society* (London: Routledge, 1969), pp.176-177.

19 Simon Gunn, ‘Class, Identity and the Urban: the middle class in England, c.1790-1950’, *Urban History*, 31, 1 (2204), 29-47; Gunn, *Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*; R.J. Morris, ‘The middle class and British towns and cities of the industrial revolution, 1780-1870’ in Derek Fraser and Anthony Sutcliffe (eds), *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983).



From a methodological standpoint, it was important to be able to offer a large amount of supporting material if I was to make generalised comments and analyses of Yorkshire cultural identities during the period under study. This has been obtained from the examination and appraisal of printed matter and visual ephemera of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The physical originals were consulted in most cases, with the libraries, archives and special collections that are listed in the Acknowledgments being especially valuable. Some regional novels were read online, via sites such as Project Gutenberg. Such instances are acknowledged in references. But digitisation was only employed on a significant scale for the chapters dealing with the regional newspaper press and Yorkshire county societies. Some newspapers, notably the *Yorkshire Post*, have not been digitised and were therefore read on microfilm, but the great majority of the press sources quoted in the thesis were accessed via the 19th Century British Library Newspapers searchable database administered by Gale. The digitised databases of newspapers available for countries that include Australia, New Zealand and Canada were also used extensively.

In this thesis there are some dogs that do not bark in the night, or do so only faintly. For example, there are references to strands of radicalism in Yorkshire politics, and to the influence of Nonconformity in religion. But difficulties arise in defining ‘Yorkshire politics’ or ‘Yorkshire religion’ when neighbouring cities such as Leeds and Bradford displayed considerable diversity. By the same token, musical excellence was seen as a hallmark of Yorkshire and this is acknowledged at several points in the thesis. However, it was excellence in the specialised field of choral singing that accounted for most of the county’s musical self-esteem. The fact that Yorkshire was relatively weak in the origination as opposed to the execution of music, and the fact that it had a mediocre record in the field of orchestral playing, were sources of anxiety, especially in Leeds, the location of a celebrated festival. This issue is explored, but in the near absence of a distinct Yorkshire idiom in music, the subject is dealt with tangentially, without a dedicated chapter.

In addition to its unifying argument and theme, the thesis is intended to make a contribution to the knowledge and analysis of a substantial number of individuals and publications that played a key role in populist Yorkshire culture during the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Some figures, such as the dialect poet John Hartley, are still visible and subject to occasional analysis. Others, such as James Burnley, Richard Blakeborough and Halliwell Sutcliffe, while known to some specialists, have almost faded from view. Others, such as the artist Arthur North, have sunk into deep obscurity. Restoring them to view, as minor but significant figures in the regional culture of their time, is a valuable by-product of this research project.

# The psychology of Yorkshireness

Scientific and cultural approaches to issues of character and identity

THE following passages, both published in 1908, are extracts from appraisals of the Yorkshire character. The first is by J.S. Fletcher (1863-1935), a Halifax-born author and journalist, and the second is by Dr J. Hambley Rowe (1870-1937), a medical practitioner who was born in Cornwall but spent most of his adult life in Bradford.

1) Many people, the inhabitants of London in particular, discover that unless the Yorkshireman is given way to he is by no means an amenable person to live with. He is never surprised; he does not stand in awe of anything; and he is not easily impressed. And having been born with an ineradicable belief that Yorkshire is the finest country in the world, and that Yorkshiremen are the most capable examples of the human race yet evolved, he has a habit of conveying to all outsiders, not always in the most delicate fashion, a suggestion that themselves and their opinions are only worth consideration when his own have first taken place.<sup>1</sup>

2) All were agreed that his expressions of notions and ideas, of assent and dissent were brusque and abrupt. Some went so far as to say that the Yorkshireman had no manners, that he was rude, that he was discourteous, that he alas called a spade a spade, and might even prefix an impolite adjective to the unoffending garden tool. That curtness, brevity, bluntness, and a directness almost ferocious at times are very frequently met with in Yorkshire is undeniable. To call such brusqueness of expression rudeness, unmannerliness, boorishness, is however, to betray a certain femininity of character... abrupt outspokenness and no beating about the bush is a healthful sign in a people.<sup>2</sup>

The two texts express similar sentiments but their contexts are a contrast. Fletcher's passage is from his *A Book About Yorkshire*, a history-cum-travelogue. His chapter entitled 'The Yorkshire Folk' appraises the characteristics of the county's people. It draws on Yorkshire's history and some of its famous individuals and families but it is essentially a subjective analysis that begins with a bold but unsupported statement.

It is usually held, all the world over, that the Yorkshireman possesses certain qualities and characteristics which distinguish him from all other Englishmen, and one only has to cross the borders of the county into Derbyshire or Durham or Lancashire to discover that one's nearest neighbours are of a decided opinion that the folk of the Three Ridings are in truth a people peculiar to themselves. It scarcely seems credible that the mere intervention of narrow rivers like the Tees and the Ribble can make so much difference, or that the folk who live on the Derbyshire side of Sheffield can be so vastly dissimilar to those who dwell on the Yorkshire side, but it is the truth that the geographical lines of demarcation denote a gulf which nothing has yet been able to bridge.<sup>3</sup>

The cumulative effect of Fletcher's prose is overweening and has been described as smug, insufferable and 'part of an image to be lived down' even by the writer of a book arguing for the county's exceptionalism and territorial integrity.<sup>4</sup> But it demonstrates that a strong sense of Yorkshire identity, however hyperbolic and self-satisfied, was well established and had perhaps reached its zenith by the early-twentieth century.

Far from being subjective, the passage by Dr Rowe was from an article intended to

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1 J.S.Fletcher, *A Book About Yorkshire* (London: Methuen, 1908), p.198.

2 J. Hambley Rowe, 'An Investigation into the Character of the West Riding Personality', *Bradford Scientific Journal*, Vol II, No 16 (April 1908), 118-128 [121].

3 Fletcher, *Book About Yorkshire*, pp.196-197.

4 Michael Bradford, *The Fight for Yorkshire* (Beverley: Hutton, 1988), p.14.

contain objective scientific truth. Rowe was the anthropology editor of the *Bradford Scientific Journal*, published quarterly between 1904 and 1912 by the Bradford Scientific Association. His article illustrates how, under the influence of the emergent science of anthropology and associated disciplines such as ethnology, comparative psychology, anthropometrics and, indeed, eugenics, issues of regional identity and characteristics could be discussed in racially and environmentally determinist terms.<sup>5</sup>

Rowe's project and its backdrop will be analysed in more detail towards the end of this chapter, the purpose of which is to collate and discuss nineteenth and early-twentieth century attempts to describe Yorkshire character traits. Such exercises possibly played a symbiotic role in the construction of the county's identity, encouraging or perpetuating the very qualities that they purported to record. The concluding argument of the chapter will be that although quasi-scientific attempts could be made to delineate regional characteristics, the latter are essentially cultural constructs. However much anthropometrical data they accumulated, the scientific analysts of Yorkshiriness were forced to resort to the same empirical and observational methods as the purely cultural commentators and would come to similar conclusions. Whatever methodology was used, these attempts to isolate specific Yorkshire character traits were being made at a period when, according to Peter Mandler, a belief in a truly national English character – based to an increasing extent on racial determinism – was spreading.<sup>6</sup> If this is so, then late-nineteenth century analyses of English regional characteristics could be seen as contradictory to this nationalising process. But it is better to see them as complementary to it, in accordance with a theme of this thesis, that regional and national identities could be promulgated in parallel with each other.

The stereotype of the hard-headed, often boorish 'Yorkshire Tyke' or 'Yorkshire Bite' was nationally established by the eighteenth century. The *Oxford English Dictionary's* secondary definition of 'Yorkshire' is that the word is used allusively, especially 'in reference to the boorishness, cunning, sharpness, or trickery attributed to Yorkshire people'. Eleven quotations are used to support this definition, the first nine of which date from 1620 to 1801.<sup>7</sup> The evolution of these terms will be analysed in due course. A mid-nineteenth century attempt to distil the essence of the Yorkshire character that had a wide circulation was made by Elizabeth Gaskell in her *Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857). She provided a detailed analysis of the 'peculiar force of character which the Yorkshireman displays'.

This makes them interesting as a race; while at the same time, as individuals, the remarkable degree of self-sufficiency they possess gives them an air of independence rather apt to repel a stranger...

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5 Henrika Kuklick, 'The British Tradition', in Henrika Kuklick (ed), *A New History of Anthropology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008); Fredrick Barth, 'The Rise of Anthropology in Britain', in Fredrick Barth, Andre Gingrich, Robert Parkin and Sydel Silverman, *One Discipline, Four Ways: British, German, French and American Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); G.W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (London: Macmillan, 1987); Douglas A. Lorimer, 'Nature, Racism and Late Victorian Science', *Canadian Journal of History*, Vol 25, December 1990, 369-385; L.S. Hearnshaw, *A Short History of British Psychology, 1840-1940* (London: Methuen, 1964); Richard J. Herrnstein and Edwin G. Boring, *A Source Book in the History of Psychology* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press); Dai Jones and Jonathan Elcock, *History of Theories of Psychology* (London: Arnold, 2001).

6 Peter Mandler, *The English National Character* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), p.65.

7 *Oxford English Dictionary*, Second edition, 1989; online version March 2011 [<http://www.oed.com:80/Entry/232138>]; accessed 6 May 2011].



Conscious of the strong sagacity and the dogged power of will which seems almost the birthright of the natives of the West Riding, each man relies upon himself, and seeks no help at the hands of his neighbour... He belongs to that keen yet short-sighted class, who consider suspicion of all whose honesty is not proved as a sign of wisdom... The affections are strong and their foundations lie deep; but they are not ... widespread: nor do they show themselves on the surface. Indeed, there is little display of the amenities of life among this wild, rough population. Their accost is curt; their accent and tone of speech blunt and harsh. Something of this may, probably, be attributed to the freedom of mountain air and of isolated hill-side life; something be derived from their rough Norse ancestry. They have a quick perception of character and a keen sense of humour; the dwellers among them must be prepared for certain uncomplimentary, though most likely true, observations, pithily expressed. Their feelings are not easily roused, but their duration is lasting... From the same cause come also enduring grudges, in some cases amounting to hatred, which occasionally has been bequeathed from generation to generation... These men are keen and shrewd; faithful and persevering in following out a good purpose, fell in tracking an evil one. They are not emotional; they are not easily made into either friends or enemies; but once lovers or haters, it is difficult to change their feeling. They are a powerful race both in mind and body, both for good and for evil.<sup>8</sup>

Gaskell explained her motive for this analysis.

For a right understanding of the life of my dear friend, Charlotte Brontë, it appears to me more necessary in her case than in most others, that the reader should be made acquainted with the peculiar forms of population and society amidst which her earliest years were passed.<sup>9</sup>

The implication is that Brontë's fiction was a product of her environment and that, in turn, the character of upland Yorkshire people was determined by topography and racial inheritance. It was, as Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund have observed, an anthropological approach, adopted by Gaskell in order to displace coarseness in Brontë's fiction on to the landscape and the local population in which she lived.<sup>10</sup>

The *Life of Charlotte Brontë* was beset by legal difficulties, but its first two editions rapidly sold out.<sup>11</sup> Its analysis of Yorkshire character was one of the the most widely circulated of the nineteenth century – perhaps exceeded only by Dickens's depiction of John Browdie in *Nicholas Nickleby* – and it was frequently commented on in Yorkshire itself, not always favourably. In 1881, a contributor to a Leeds periodical complained that Mrs Gaskell's attempts to delineate the Yorkshire character did 'no more than perpetuate the idiotic lampoon usually represented upon the London stage'.<sup>12</sup> Gaskell wrote from the perspective of 'an inhabitant of the neighbouring county of Lancaster', but within her passage there are observations that, with variants, would become tropes in analyses of Yorkshireness written by natives or inhabitants of the county. Key words and themes in Gaskell include self-sufficiency, independence, a 'blunt and harsh' mode of speech, shrewdness, outspokenness, physicality and a capacity for holding grudges. There is also a determinist explanation that such characteristics are the result of the physical environment or 'rough Norse ancestry'. Gaskell, whose Unitarianism made her receptive to scientific theories, was a cousin of Charles Darwin and would incorporate his ideas

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8 Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951; [orig. pub. 1857]), pp. 9-10.

9 Ibid., p.9.

10 Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund, *Victorian Publishing and Mrs Gaskell's Work* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), pp. 132-133.

11 Linda H. Peterson, 'Elizabeth Gaskell's "The Life of Charlotte Brontë"' in Jill L. Matus (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Elizabeth Gaskell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 59-74.

12 'W.S.', 'Yorkshire Character', *The Yorkshire Busy Bee*, 15 October 1881. The author might have been William Smith, founder of the Yorkshire Literary Union, or the antiquarian William Scruton.

into some of her fiction.<sup>13</sup> *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* was published before *The Origin of Species*, but Gaskell's suggestion that racial and environmental factors influenced the Yorkshire character suggest an awareness of the ethnological ideas that were gaining wider currency in the 1840s.<sup>14</sup> She anticipated by half a century Dr J. Hambley Rowe's attempt to place the Yorkshire character on a scientific footing. But most delineations of Yorkshire characteristics, while they might owe something to Gaskell, were emotional and subjective.

For example, the North Riding folklorist, dialect poet, performer and publisher Richard Blakeborough (1850-1918) – whose central role in promulgating Yorkshire stereotypes will be the focus of Chapter 2 – wrote a 1200-word passage in one of his journals of the 1890s. It is prefaced by the phrase 'just a few words as to the character of our Yorkshire people...' and is presumably a draft for a speech or some other public performance. It was evidently the prelude for a set of anecdotes, but a substantial extract is given here:

When it is asserted that every Yorkshireman you meet is a character, it must be borne in mind that over and above isolated peculiarities, there are certain characteristics attaching to the people generally who inhabit this part of England... Every one admits that a Yorkshireman is good to challenge... It is also a fact that South Country people do not get on with us Yorkshire people at first and for this as for everything else there must be a reason... Nearly all Southerners agree that our manners are not good. We are said to be rough and rude. And doubtless in a way this is quite true. The Yorkshireman no doubt has a way of speaking his mind very freely and telling you what he thinks, even if his opinions be never so contrary to your own. What others would let you know by innuendo... he makes known to you without the slightest reserve or disguise... You can always tell whether a Yorkshireman likes or dislikes you, simply because he as good as tells you...

If we are nothing else, we are a very independent people, and any kind of interference with the free exercise of that independence is quickly resented. It often happens when Southerners are in a position of authority, they treat our Yorkshire folks in a patronising [way], and as if incapable of knowing their own minds. Few independent people like such treatment, but to a Yorkshireman this is so specially galling, they like to be approached on equal terms of manhood. Approach them otherwise and it is almost a certainty you will come off worsted. This in no way interferes with their willingness to treat others with respect, they always respect any man who have proved to be worthy or respect... The Yorkshireman's independence is of a most healthy kind, it is not only a good thing in itself but it also fits a man for making his way in the world, and struggling with the battles of life. And yet one hears this very quality written of as if it were something to be deplored. 'You Yorkshiremen and women are such an independent lot. I never came across such independent ill mannered people'. 'They are so independent they don't seem to care for anybody'...

...then again they say Yorkshiremen are such money lovers. They keep such a tight grip on their purses. It is commonly hard to get money out of them etc. Now doubtless it is true that we, like a great many others, know the value of money fairly well. It may be we attach a greater value to small sums than the Londoner does. Still, for all that, we can be and are most liberal with our money, when the reason for laying it out seems to be a fairly strong and valid one.

A more practical people do not exist than the Yorkshire people. They look at every thing from a practical point of view.... When a difficulty has arisen and the Yorkshireman says "Whya tha knaws, yan mun deea t'best yan can" you feel fairly satisfied that nothing will be left undone that should have been done. Closely connected with this feature, is his utilitarianism. These two qualities combined guide him as to the expenditure of money, and most cautious and circumspect is the Yorkshireman in all matters and especially those which touch his pocket directly or indirectly.

The appreciation of the power of the purse makes him shrewd at making a bargain and economical in all his ways. Yorkshire people are hard to get at, say our Southern friends, that is to say that it is hard at first to know them.

...Without showing it very much, Yorkshiremen will attach themselves most faithfully to those they can look up to and respect, but they are slow in taking in and acting on an established principle. They look at the principle through the man who is supposed to represent it and if that representative disappoints them the principle has to take care of itself. In one word, the

13 Patsy Stoneman, *Elizabeth Gaskell* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp.124-126.

14 The Ethnological Society of London was formed in 1843. Dissenters would be prominent in nineteenth century British anthropology –Kuklick, 'The British Tradition', p.52. Barth, 'The Rise of Anthropology in Britain', pp.1-21.

Yorkshireman is hospitable down to the ground...<sup>15</sup>

Blakeborough offers no racial or environmental explanations for Yorkshireness, but there are many similarities between his exposition of the Yorkshire character and the analysis furnished by Elizabeth Gaskell, including bluntness of manner, outspokenness, a confrontational streak and self-sufficiency, or independence. Blakeborough adds hospitality, which as a subsequent chapter will show, was widely claimed as a Yorkshire characteristic in the nineteenth century.

He lays emphasis on the interaction between Southerners and Yorkshire people, and the wilful misunderstanding of the latter by the former. This amounts to a grievance on Blakeborough's part and it is a theme that emerges in his published work, such as a dialect poem describing 'T'Lass fra Lunnon', who turns out to be empty-headed and domestically useless, and an item entitled 'A Comparison of Two Languages as Spoken at the Present Day', in which two Yorkshiremen see off a pretentious and patronising southern visitor.<sup>16</sup> This defensive attitude could be the result of personal experience – one of Blakeborough's activities was to act as a resident entertainer at house parties in North Yorkshire, where he might have encountered supercilious guests – or it might be a symptom of a late century decline in Yorkshire and general provincial self-confidence.

When J.S. Fletcher wrote about his home county he had no lack of confidence. His *The Making of Modern Yorkshire* (1918) is a whiggish account of the county's progress since the eighteenth century, with a great deal of admiration for prominent individuals, such as self-made nineteenth-century industrialists. This is a manifestation of the process whereby a region's identity could be constructed around the deeds and character of its prominent people, evident when Fletcher wrote that

In every one of the great industrial towns of the West Riding, it is an easy matter to point to family after family, now high in social position and rich in money, whose forbears were, comparatively recently, poor, honest, hard-working folk ... Nowhere in the world are there finer examples of how men can raise themselves above the ruck by the exercise of shrewdness, perseverance, far-sightedness and energy, than are evident on all sides in Yorkshire wherever woollen manufacture is to the front. Some day, perhaps, some enthusiast will gather up the chronicles of all these early pioneers and adventurers into the great ocean of commerce, and they will form them into Acts and Monuments of the Yorkshire Worthies in a fashion which fires the ambition of Yorkshiremen yet to be born...<sup>17</sup>

Joseph Smith Fletcher was born in 1863, the son of a Halifax Congregational minister. He would later explain that the success of Nonconformity in the West Riding was due to the fact that 'Yorkshiremen, as a race, hate all oppression and love freedom'.<sup>18</sup> Orphaned at the age of eight, Fletcher was raised on his grandmother's farm, near Pontefract. At the age of 18 he went to London and became a sub-editor. By the early 1890s he was a leader writer for the *Leeds Mercury* and wrote articles on rural affairs but he began to move away from journalism and became a writer of Yorkshire dialect poetry, novels and books of history, archaeology, religion and travel. He found his greatest fame, from 1914, as an author of

15 Richard Blakeborough, undated notebook (internal evidence suggests 1895-96), Richard Blakeborough and John Fairfax-Blakeborough Collection of Yorkshire Folklore, Archives of Cultural Tradition, University of Sheffield, ACT/97-005 3.5, pp. 132-141. Paragraphing is supplied.

16 Richard Blakeborough, *Yorkshire Wit, Character, Folklore and Customs* (Saltburn-by-the-Sea: W.Rapp and Sons, 1911 [orig. pub. 1898]), pp. 271 and 281.

17 J.S.Fletcher, *The Making of Modern Yorkshire* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1918), pp.140-141.

18 Ibid., p.225.

crime fiction, enjoying notable success in the USA.<sup>19</sup> Fletcher published some 209 books,<sup>20</sup> of which 20 dealt with the history and archaeology of Yorkshire. He was a member of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society and the Yorkshire Dialect Society, although, according to an obituary, he complained of neglect in his native county.<sup>21</sup> He lived in Surrey for the later part of his life.

Fletcher's most substantial analysis of Yorkshireness was in his *Book About Yorkshire*, from which extracts were given at the start of this chapter. The index, under 'Yorkshiremen, Characteristics of', furnishes a concise list of key words and phrases. It includes

- Belief in established institutions.
- Bluff hospitality
- Clannishness.
- Earnestness and forcefulness.
- Independence.
- Individuality.
- Love of dogs and horses.
- Love of having everything their own way.
- Admiration for and seriousness in money making
- Love of open air sports.
- Earnestness in politics and religion.
- Pugnaciousness.
- Sense of humour.
- Shrewdness.
- Tendency to eccentricity.

As a list of auto-stereotypes, this springs few surprises and bears strong resemblances to the analyses offered by Elizabeth Gaskell and Richard Blakeborough. 'Belief in established institutions' seems to contradict Fletcher's assertions elsewhere about Nonconformity having a natural home in Yorkshire. It is explained by the alleged fact that 'the rustic Yorkshireman likes old houses and old families, just as he likes old ale and ripe cheese, and he has an affection for the hall and the manor-house which townsfolk scarcely understand'.<sup>22</sup>

Another possible contradiction is to be found between Fletcher's analysis that Yorkshire people were noted for their individuality but also displayed 'clannishness'. His explanation of the latter quality is that the Yorkshireman is obliged 'to carry the Yorkshire atmosphere with him wherever he goes'.

He has travelled to the uttermost parts of the world: but his first care on settling anywhere, whether it be New Zealand or in London, is to gather his fellow-Yorkshiremen about him, to

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19 Fletcher became a celebrity author in the United States when, in November 1919, it was reported that the convalescing President Wilson's reading list, overseen by his physician, included Fletcher's detective story *The Middle Temple Murder*. This was immediately used as a selling point by Fletcher's American publishers, e.g. an advertisement in the *New York Tribune*, 15 November 1919.

20 Estimate made from the British Library Integrated Catalogue.

21 Obit. J.S. Fletcher, *The Yorkshire Post*, 1 February 1935. Some of the biographical details of Fletcher's life are taken from this and from *The Times*, 1 February 1935.

22 Fletcher, *Book About Yorkshire*, p.174.

make with them a club, corporation or society, the prime object of which is in all cases the holding of convivialities whereat the menu and the toast list must be printed in one or other of the multitudinous dialects for which the county is celebrated. Other men seeking foreign parts – and it must be remembered that to the true-bred Yorkshireman Lincoln or Dublin are just as foreign as Chicago – are gradually assimilated by their surroundings; the Yorkshireman either converts his new surroundings to his own use and his own likings, or goes elsewhere, undisturbed and unashamed.<sup>23</sup>

By the time Fletcher published these words, The Society of Yorkshiremen in London, of which he was a member, had been established for nine years and there were numerous similar organisations throughout the British Empire. These societies were a significant affirmation of a Yorkshire county identity, as I will show, but they were not peculiar to Yorkshire. Other English county societies were formed at home and overseas, anticipating Yorkshire in several cases. Such organisations were not, as Fletcher implied, a case for Yorkshire exceptionalism, but they do provide evidence of strategies used by the English to sub-divide their identity when abroad in London or overseas.

Appraisals of the Yorkshire character by writers such as Fletcher, Blakeborough and, to a great extent, Gaskell were empirical, based on subjective observations. But racial inheritance was increasingly used as an explanation for Yorkshire characteristics, both physical and behavioural. We have already seen how Gaskell invoked ‘rough Norse ancestry’. In 1890 the *Leeds Mercury* carried extracts from a paper on ‘The Yorkshire Dalesman’, written by J. Dickinson for the *National Review*, which argued that Yorkshireness was the product of an alliance between Norse and Celtic strains. He also alleged that the north of England had achieved hegemony over the south.

To the making of our dalesman... the Saxon has contributed but small share, if any. In build he is tall and sinewy, carrying no lumber: he has keen, grey eyes; hair black as a raven. These characteristics he owes to his Norse forefathers, as also that sturdy, aggressive independence that unbosoms to no man, and calls no man ‘Sir’ or ‘Master’. He embodies the yearning of the Frisian of old... This same Norse forefather, when he had slain the Celtic lord of the soil, had the good sense to marry the Celtic widow, and to this Celtic strain his descendant is indebted for that shrewd eye to a bargain, that quick inventiveness and push which have transferred England’s centre of gravity from south to north. To her too, too, he owes that never-failing mother wit and quiet humour which made Baring-Gould say that every second Yorkshireman one meets is a character.<sup>24</sup>

This strain of pseudo-anthropology was a consequence of the study of scientific racism which had originated in the late eighteenth century and underwent various divergences and controversies during the nineteenth. By the 1890s there was widespread popular awareness of anthropology and ethnology.<sup>25</sup>

A key figure was Dr John Beddoe (1826-1911), a member and, in 1870, president of the Anthropological Society of London. His ethnological and anthropological investigations and anthropometrical surveys concentrated on the British Isles and he was largely responsible, according to David Miles, for the ‘classical myth [of the] small, dark

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23 Ibid., p.198.

24 *Leeds Mercury*, 5 April 1890. The reference to Sabine Baring-Gould (1834–1924) is derived from a passage in this clergyman, writer and folklorist’s book *Yorkshire Oddities* (London: John Hodges, 1877). The preface explains that ‘I left Yorkshire in 1872, with a large amount of material, collected in that county, relating to its eccentric children. A friend, when he heard that I was collecting such material, exclaimed, “What are you about? Every other Yorkshireman is a character!” Such is the case. No other county produces so much originality – and that originality, when carried to excess, is eccentricity’.

25 Lorimer, ‘Nature, Racism and Late Victorian Science’; Kuklick, ‘The British Tradition’; Barth, ‘The Rise of Anthropology in Britain’; Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*.



Welshman'.<sup>26</sup> He devised an 'index of nigrescence', recorded hair and eye colour and carried out cranial measurements in order to arrive at conclusions summarised in *The Races of Britain* (1885).<sup>27</sup> Beddoe's work provided data that was taken up by the eugenics movement. His conclusions about the Irish – that they were 'Africanoid' – are alleged to have fuelled British prejudice and a widespread current view of Beddoe's work is that it was pseudo-scientific.<sup>28</sup>

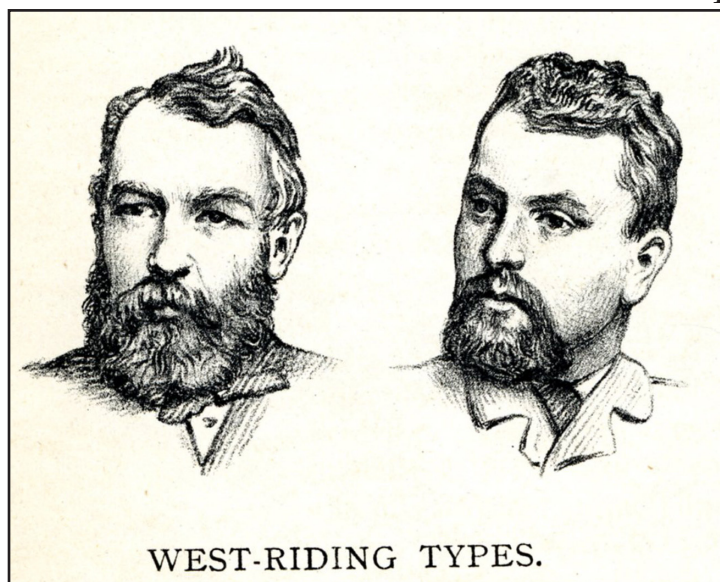


Figure 1: 'West Riding types' in Dr John Beddoe's *The Races of Britain* (1885).

The racial constitution of Yorkshire was to Beddoe an 'attractive problem' that he addressed in *The Races of Britain* and in a number of papers and articles. He combined ethnology with a detailed study of the Domesday Book in order to arrive at his conclusions. The North and East Ridings of Yorkshire had an Anglo-Danish population, Beddoe decided, although the Conquest might have led to some variants among the 'tall, large-boned, muscular' population, with its 'visage long, angular; complexion fair or florid; eyes blue or grey; hair light, brown or reddish'.<sup>29</sup> Captain Cook was nominated as an example. The 'elevated districts of the West Riding' had people whom Beddoe took to be 'a variety of the Anglian'. They were 'robust, visage oval, full and rounded; nose often slightly aquiline; complexion somewhat embrowned, florid; eyes brown or gray; hair brown or reddish'.<sup>30</sup> Beddoe provided illustrations of two 'West Riding Types' [Figure 1]. He added that

in the ancient kingdom of Loidis and Elmet, from Tadcaster and Leeds westwards up Airedale and the Worth Valley to the Lancashire frontier, the fair race predominates to a remarkable degree. I can see nothing British or Iberian about them; they are the bold, rude, obstinate race so well depicted by Charlotte Brontë, who lived among them.<sup>31</sup>

This last observation brings us full circle to Elizabeth Gaskell and Hawthorne was indeed a

26 David Miles, *The Tribes of Britain* (London: Phoenix, 2005), p.23.

27 For Beddoe's life and career see the histories of anthropology cited above, also an obituary in *Man* [journal of the Royal Anthropological Society of Great Britain and Ireland] Vol 11 (1911), 151-153 and Angelique Richardson, 'Beddoe, John (1826-1911)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30666>, accessed 15 May 2011].

28 Peatling has cited Beddoe's work as an example of the 'pseudoscientific research' which influenced the Home Rule debate by 'proving' that the supposed depravity of the Irish was racially determined – G. K. Peatling, 'The Whiteness of Ireland Under and After the Union', *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (January 2005), 115-133 [126]. See also Charles E. Orser Jr., 'The Challenge of Race to American Historical Archaeology', *American Anthropologist* New Series, Vol. 100, No. 3 (Sep., 1998), 661-668; L.P. Curtis Jr, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: a study of anti-Irish prejudice in Victorian England* (Bridgeport, Conn. Conference on British Studies at the University of Bridgeport, 1968); L.P. Curtis, Jr. 'The Return of Revisionism', *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (January 2005), 134-145.

29 John Beddoe, *The Races of Britain* (London: Trubner and Co, 1885), p.250.

30 Ibid., p.251.

31 Ibid.

focus for Beddow's anthropometrics. In the 1870s he made observations of the people of the district and compiled a table that gave a detailed analysis of their head forms, including the shapes of their noses and chins. These were set out in an article co-written by Beddow for the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* and published in 1907. He recalls how he held an anthropometrics session at the Oakworth Board School, where he examined the eyes and hair colour of a succession of pupils. In the late-nineteenth century, anthropologists such as Beddow believed that industrialisation and mobility meant that time was running out for their observations.

... the value of the table is impaired by the fact that in the latter part of the last century, after the decay of the ribbon trade in Coventry and of lead mining in Swaledale, many people immigrated hither from the former and some from the latter locality... the Coventry children may have increased the proportion of dark eyes and hair. A Swaledale child was distinctly Scandinavian, blonde and straight-profiled... A girl of Highland pedigree, with blue eyes and dark curly locks, was so obviously alien that we at once challenged and excluded her.<sup>32</sup>

Writing about the citizens of Bradford, Beddow concluded that they were 'undergoing a change of type' of a sort that other researchers had been finding in large towns – 'a change in the direction of narrower heads and darker hair, which may or may not be called a degeneration'.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the supposed scientific basis and the forest of measurements and other data with which Beddow supported his work, he was quite prepared to indulge in the kind of empirical observation that we have seen in the writings of authors such as Blakeborough and Fletcher. In *The Races of Britain*, Beddow concluded that

in few parts of Britain does there exist a more clearly marked moral type than in Yorkshire. To that of the Irish it has no affinity; but the Scotchman and the Southern Englishman alike recognise the differences which distinguish the Yorkshire character from their own, but are not so apt to apprehend the numerous respective points of resemblance. The character is essentially Teutonic, including the shrewdness, the truthfulness without candour, the perseverance, energy and industry of the Lowland Scotch, but little of their frugality, or of the theological instinct common to the Welsh and Scotch, or of the imaginative genius, or the more brilliant qualities which sometimes light up the Scottish character. The sound judgment, the spirit of fair play, the love of comfort, order and cleanliness, and the fondness for heavy feeding, are shared with the Saxon Englishman; but some of them are still more strongly marked in the Yorkshireman, as is also the bluff independence, a very fine quality when it does not degenerate into selfish rudeness. The aptitude for music was remarked by Giraldus Cambrensis seven centuries ago, and the taste for horseflesh seems to have descended from the old Northmen, though it may have been fostered by local circumstances. The mind, like the body, is generally very vigorous and energetic, and extremely well adapted to commercial and industrial pursuits, as well as the cultivation of the exact sciences; but a certain defect in imaginative power must be admitted, and is probably one reason, though obviously not the only one, which Yorkshire, until quite modern times, was generally behindhand in politics and religion.<sup>34</sup>

With phrases such as 'bluff independence', 'taste for horseflesh' (by which is presumably meant a passion for riding, rearing and selling horses), observations such as 'fondness for heavy feeding' and an attempt to find points of equivalence and contrasts with the Scots, Dr John Beddow the eminent anthropologist was arriving at conclusions very similar to those of numerous non-scientific authors, journalists and others who will be cited in this thesis. This could be taken as corroborative evidence that such conclusions about Yorkshireness

32 John Beddow and Joseph Hambley Rowe, 'The Ethnology of West Yorkshire', *The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol XIX (1907), 31-60 [38].

33 Ibid., 50.

34 Beddow, *Races of Britain*, pp.251-252.

have objective truth; or it could be that certain ideas about Yorkshire identity had fully entered national and regional discourse by the late-nineteenth century and achieved self-perpetuation.

The ‘coadjutor’ for Beddoe’s 1907 *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* article was the Cornish-born Joseph Hambley Rowe MB, whose own project to place aspects of Yorkshire, or the West Riding’s identity on a scientific basis was nearing fruition. Rowe was one of four members of the editorial board of the *Bradford Scientific Journal (BSJ)*, with responsibility for anthropology. In the October 1904 edition, Rowe introduced a project entitled ‘The Psychology of the West Riding Personality’. Readers were reminded that nations were known to have distinctive characteristics – the ‘vivacious Frenchy’, the ‘heavy-witted Dutchman’ and the ‘vengeful, quick tempered Italian’ were cited – and told that ‘one feels convinced that underlying them is a kernel of some solid scientific fact, empirically obtained perhaps, but nevertheless, a fact, and consequently a phenomenon of scientific import, and worthy of study’. Rowe added that ‘what was true of nations was also true of component peoples that go to make up nationalities’.<sup>35</sup>

Thanks to anthropometry, we know a great deal about the differences in the physique (stature, bulk and colour) of different portions of the British nation. We want now to know something of the differences in the mental equipment of the constituent portions of our great race. We propose to tackle this great subject in a novel manner, and we purpose finding out the peculiarities of the West Riding mind. They say you can tell a Yorkshireman anywhere, even though he be dumb. There is a certain aroma, so to speak, of his mind that betrays him. What is this aroma? We ask our readers to tell us.<sup>36</sup>

Rowe explained that he particularly wanted responses from people who were not Yorkshiremen but had lived in the county for several years. They should send him their estimate of the ‘traits of character that are specially noticeable in the average West Riding man. We will also gladly have the opinion of Yorkshiremen on themselves’. By responding, readers would ‘do a great deal for the extremely important science of comparative psychology’.<sup>37</sup> In the January 1905 edition of the *BSJ*, Rowe reiterated his project and attempted to solicit more replies to his request, although some had come from ‘distant Kent’ and from as far away as India.

We want to know what the reader thinks of the Yorkshireman as an individual. Wherein does he excel? In what characteristics of the intellect and emotions is he lacking? What are the strong points of his moral character and his business capacity and what are his weak points? What we want from every reader is a reasonable, just, fair and square estimate of the sentiments, the intelligence, the tastes and the appetites of the natives of the West Riding... Mr Asquith has recently been voicing his opinions on the subject ... reader let us have yours, on a post card or in a long essay.<sup>38</sup>

The reference to Asquith almost certainly derived from a speech which the Morley-born politician had made at the annual dinner of the Society of Yorkshiremen in London, in December 1904. He delivered a lengthy encomium to the county, concluding that ‘in

35 J. Hambley Rowe, ‘The Psychology of the West Riding Personality’, *Bradford Scientific Journal*, Vol 1, No 2 (October 1904), 34.

36 Ibid.

37 As a discipline, comparative psychology was a development of Darwin’s theories and was usually used to address problems of animal behaviour, but also to investigate a mental continuum between man and animals. See Hearnshaw, *A Short History of British Psychology*; Herrnstein and Boring, *A Source Book in the History of Psychology*, p.454; Jones and Elcock, *History of Theories of Psychology*, p.46.

38 J. Hambley Rowe, ‘The Psychology of the West Riding Personality’, *Bradford Scientific Journal*, Vol 1 No 3 (January 1905), 5.



all the walks of life, and in every department of thought and of action, Yorkshire had contributed...in a greater degree than any other county in England had done to the making of their country, and to the service of mankind'.<sup>39</sup>

It would be three years before Rowe finally reported on his findings, telling *BSJ* readers in April 1908 that in order to define

the salient points of the West Riding character more precisely in a manner not heretofore attempted and on a system which would give us a result as far removed from empiricism as such a subject will allow, a suggestive series of questions embodying the names of the commoner temperaments, emotions and reasoning processes was submitted to large number of people...<sup>40</sup>

It would appear that Rowe had resorted to sending out questionnaires, possibly because of a low response to his initial invitation. He hoped that 'the eccentricity of any individual observation would be lost in the mass, and the mention of a trait by many would reveal it clearly as an outstanding characteristic of the gentleman who was undergoing vivisection'. Rowe was disappointed by the response to his project, stating that he had not received as many replies as he had hoped. He provided no figures and was rather defensive when he wrote: 'That the method adopted in this investigation is open to criticism, no one feels more than the investigator, but on the other hand it may be advanced that it is the most scientific method of which the subject is capable'.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, Rowe proceeded to summarise his findings, dividing them into the categories of emotions, reasoning faculties and temperament. The last-named quality was deemed to include the Yorkshireman's capacity for 'steady continuous work' and the Yorkshire person's need to keep their muscles moving. 'Every doctor has personal experience of the difficulties in getting a genuine Yorkshireman to carry out the treatment ... of complete rest', wrote Rowe, a medical practitioner himself.<sup>42</sup> This restlessness was used to account for the manufacturing primacy of the West Riding.

With a different and lazier race in possession, but with the same climatic and mineral advantages, the West Riding could never have become the home of so much machinery and of so much wealth. Many another race that could easily be named would have been content with a fourth of the toil and an eighth of the money and would have spent many hours of the week in reposeful ease.<sup>43</sup>

Rowe emulated his mentor John Beddoe – who had claimed that the Yorkshire character was 'essentially Teutonic' – by speculating further on racial determinism.

As regards this county, its chief racial factor, the dominant Teutonic blood, counts for a very great deal. Much of Yorkshire blood is Scandinavian and Danish, but more is Teutonic, and in those countries which are the homes of these races today we find in a very large measure the same industrious spirit.<sup>44</sup>

Climate, geography and topography too were deemed to have had a formative influence in developing an 'ingrained habit of work', one reason being that 'moving from one place to another demanded the exercise of much more muscle comparatively speaking than in the

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<sup>39</sup> *The Times*, 9 December 1904.

<sup>40</sup> Rowe, 'An Investigation into the Character of the West Riding Personality', 118.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Born in Cornwall, Rowe had graduated in medicine from Aberdeen University in 1894. The 1901 census shows that he was a physician-surgeon, aged 30, living in Bradford.

<sup>43</sup> Rowe, 'Investigation into the Character of the West Riding Personality', 119.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

case of dwellers on flat lands'.<sup>45</sup> When he speculated on the musicality of Yorkshire people – which had been mentioned by most of those who took part in the *BSJ* survey – Rowe weighed up both racial and environmental factors.

Is [musicality] racial in its origin or is music the product of a hill and dale environment? It is generally believed to be racial, but the other hypothesis finds a good many supporters, and the country of the Highlanders, the Welsh, the Swiss and the Hartz Mountain and Tyrolese people, seems to support the argument, that people living in mountainous and hilly countries are most prone to the cultivation and enjoyment of music. The effect on the larynx of climbing hillsides must produce in the main a great range of intonations of the voice and a corresponding enlargement of the resonant chambers of the throat, nose and lungs. Constant familiarity with resonant intonations would produce a liking for the same, and this further cultivated would find expression as vocal music.<sup>46</sup>

Theories that that the hilly topography of the West Riding and the Pennines played a role in enhancing musical capacity extended to other fields of music. Beddoe's analysis could be compared to the more instinctive views of a Yorkshire brass musician, a member of 'The Bandsman's Parliament', recorded in *The British Bandsman* in 1914.

The member for Holmfirth thought that the answer to the riddle [of why Northern players produced greater sonority of 'toan' [sic] could be found under the heading of physique. Speaking generally, the people who lived amongst the hills were a finer and bigger built race than the flat country people. The district they had to traverse was uneven, very much in some parts, and brought the breathing apparatus into greater prominence, and nature stepped in...to remedy the matter by supplying the native with a greater chest expansion, which enables him to cope with the difficulties of the district... Another thing he might mention was the fresh air. The air was colder, purer, stronger and more bracing and invigorating. These two things contributed to the quality of toan.<sup>47</sup>

Although there was a consensus among Rowe's respondents about musicality, there was, he wrote, 'almost unanimous opinion against the possession by Yorkshiremen of those higher qualities of the mind grouped under the heading of artisticity... in the rank and file of Yorkshire people there is comparatively little spontaneous desire for expression in any artistic fashion'. There was however a great affection for play, and sport was perhaps 'an antithesis to hard work... Accustomed to pitting muscle and brain against opposing if not adverse or militant forces, the Yorkshireman has grown to find delight in watching contests between others or himself taking part in trials of physical and mental strength'.<sup>48</sup>

Among the other findings of the survey, humour and wit were not thought to be well developed in the county. 'What passes for humour is a form of ingenuousness, a naïveté of utterance which provokes laughter because of its simplicity of outlook and its homeliness of language'. Generosity was unanimously thought to be lacking, but independence was 'unanimously thought to be present', with the caveat that 'where we have the matter of dependence on local custom and convention then the conservative spirit of these broad acres negatives any breaking away into independent action'. Yorkshire people were deemed to be weak at abstract thought and to have good powers of memory. Towards the end of his article, Rowe returned to his anthropological and evolutionary starting-point.

Generally speaking, the qualities of the Yorkshireman are mostly in accord with a fervent belief in and a practice of the first of the two great natural basic and fundamental principles – preservation of self, and preservation of the species, principles that actuate all living matter in varying degrees,

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45 Ibid., 121.

46 Ibid., 122.

47 *The British Bandsman*, 14 February 1914, 31.

48 Rowe, 'Investigation into the Character of the West Riding Personality', 123.

from the most elementary protoplasmic organism up to the most cultured and most intellectual of mankind.<sup>49</sup>

The article thus concludes on a scientific note, but overall it is tinged with a degree of droll humour. At the inception of the project, Dr Rowe – influenced as he was by the anthropology and anthropometrics of his mentor John Beddoe – probably intended ‘The Psychology of the West Riding Personality’ to be a more rigorous scientific exercise than that which finally emerged. The altered methodology and disappointment at the response from readers of the *BSJ* took their toll, and the completed article can now be read as an interesting but faintly bizarre product of the popular anthropology of the period. Joseph Hambley Rowe’s life and interests show that he was fully capable of reconciling the cultural and the scientific. In addition to his role as anthropological editor of the Bradford Scientific Society’s journal, he also served as president of the Bradford Historical and Antiquarian Society and edited *The Bradford Antiquarian*. He was a member of the council of the Yorkshire Dialect Society and a chairman of the Brontë Society.<sup>50</sup> He commemorated his Cornish origins with membership of the Yorkshire Celtic Society and served as a president of the Bradford and District Cornish Association.<sup>51</sup> He played a role in the revival of the Cornish language and adopted the Druidical name ‘Tolzethan’ for this purpose.<sup>52</sup> He was therefore an arch-embodiment of the principle of multiple-identities, continuing to cultivate mystical Cornishness while spending his adult life in Yorkshire and becoming heavily involved in the county’s literature, history and traditions. His early attempt to find a ‘kernel of some solid scientific fact’ at the heart of Yorkshireness seems to have been superseded by an immersion in the county’s culture and this serves to emphasise that regional identity is essentially a cultural construct.

## Conclusion

It is probably undeniable that genetic inheritance and the environment will have some formative influence on regional characteristics. Nevertheless, authors who delineated Yorkshireness from a purely cultural standpoint arrived at conclusions that were similar, if not identical, to those that resulted from a scientific - or pseudo-scientific - approach. This could be regarded as corroborative. But Rowe and his mentor, the anthropologist Dr John Beddoe, needed to switch to cultural methodologies when, for example, they analysed what Beddoe called the ‘moral type’ to be found in Yorkshire. Their tables of cranial measurements and statistics concerning eye and hair colour were of little assistance. It would seem, from the sources described in this chapter, that they drew on the stereotypes already established by cultural commentators and by popular tradition and that these stereotypes had become self-perpetuating. How did they originate and how were they transmitted?

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49 Ibid. p.127.

50 In 1927 Rowe, as chairman, was closely involved in negotiations to acquire Haworth Parsonage for the Society – Charles Lemon, *A Centenary History of the Brontë Society* (The Bronte Society: 1993), p.25.

51 Obit. Joseph Hambley Rowe, *Yorkshire Post*, 12 May 1937.

52 John T. Parry, ‘The Revival of Cornish’, *PMLA*, Vol 61, No 1 (March, 1946), 258-268.

## Chapter 2.

# A Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms

Folklore, ephemera and the transmission, transformation and auto-stereotyping of the 'Tyke'



Richard Blakeborough, from the frontispiece of his *Yorkshire Wit, Character, Folklore and Custom* (1898)

RICHARD Blakeborough (1850-1918) was a professional Yorkshireman. A folklorist, entertainer, recitalist, dialect writer, publisher and sometime playwright and actor, he played a significant role in the collation and dissemination of material that promulgated and sustained various stereotypical views of Yorkshire and its inhabitants. His work is at the core of this chapter, which assembles a variety of material, including visual ephemera, in order to appraise Yorkshireness as it was constructed over the course of several centuries. Blakeborough's 'Yorkshireisms' were mostly culled from agricultural workers in the North Riding and this helped to ensure that an older set of identities – Yorkshire people as canny horse dealers, tight-fisted farmers,

unsentimental in love – was sustained well into the industrial, urban era. The medium of the illustrated picture postcard – which had its 'Golden Age' in the Edwardian period – played an important role in this process, Blakeborough having directly and indirectly

furnished the raw material for a long-running series of humorous cards that propagated traditional Yorkshire identities. The long-established, often pejorative image of the Yorkshire Tyke therefore survived after the mass of the Yorkshire population had begun to live and work in the towns and cities of the West Riding.

This dislocation did not necessarily have the transformative cultural effect we might have expected. Richard Hoggart wrote that in the midst of Leeds, to which they migrated in the 1870s, his grandparents lived a pattern of life that remained to a large extent rural, and his own parents, aunts and uncles retained some rural habits.<sup>1</sup> In the 1960s, Donald McKelvie researched proverbs and sayings among the working classes of Bradford, many of whom were descendants of people who had come to the city from surrounding villages in the nineteenth century. He collected relatively little material that was directly drawn from the industrial experience but a great deal that seemed to show continuity with rural attitudes to life.<sup>2</sup> In the early 1900s, the journalist and author J.S. Fletcher had concluded that the difference between urban and rural populations was not so marked in Yorkshire

1 Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1957), pp.13-14.

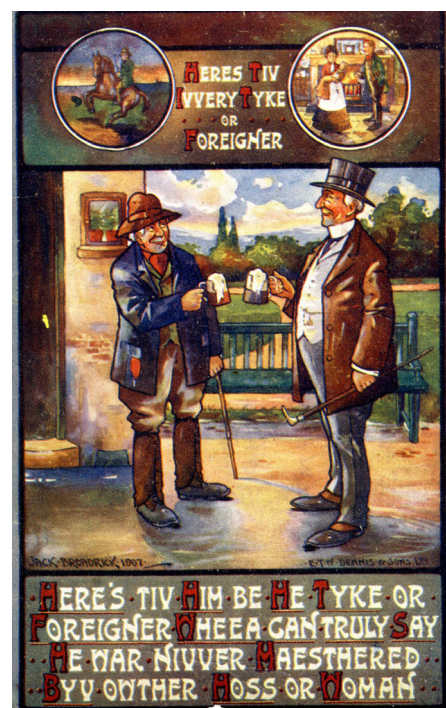
2 Donald McKelvie, 'Proverbial Elements in the Oral Tradition of an English Urban Region', *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, Vol 2, part 3 (1965), 244-261.



as it was in other counties and regions.<sup>3</sup> He provided neither analysis nor justification for the statement, but despite social and economic upheavals, the essence of the ‘Tyke’ – pre-industrial in origin – remained, albeit with some shifts in meaning. It also had the potential to transcend class. One of the postcard illustrations in an early 1900s series entitled ‘Yorkshire, Arms, Toasts and Sayings’ – to be described and analysed in detail below – depicts an elderly agricultural labourer sharing a tankard of beer with a top-hatted gentlemen, apparently united, almost conspiratorial in their ‘Tyke-ness’, although tolerant of ‘foreigners’ as they swap a toast [Figure 1].

Part of this chapter has been influenced by Gareth Stedman Jones’s examination of ‘The “cockney” and the nation’, which demonstrates how this London stereotype was one that shifted over the generations from upstanding merchant, to Dickensian chancer, music hall costermonger and doughty defier of Hitler in the Blitz.<sup>4</sup> The Yorkshire Tyke – in the national imagination – was also reshaped, from a notoriously duplicitous horse dealer to a blunt spoken and tight-fisted but essentially fair-minded northerner. But while the Cockney was – inevitably – a consistently urban figure, the Tyke originated as an essentially rural or at least pre-industrial stereotype, to be taken up by the new industrial population of the county, possibly with extra enthusiasm. During the late-nineteenth century North Riding boyhood of Sir Alfred Pease (1857-1939), ‘tyke’ had retained its original meaning as a term for a terrier or small dog, ‘though a man with the same sporting qualities as his dog might be called a Tyke too [whereas] in the West Riding the whole male population consider themselves entitled to the appellation Tykes’.<sup>5</sup>

There are points of intersection with the Stedman Jones narrative. Over the course of several centuries the notion of the Tyke journeyed from an expression of contempt until it became a term of mild affection that had acquired non-pejorative or neutral status. Also, like the Cockney, the Tyke figured in national cultural consciousness, often standing for a generalised and mistrustful view of the North as a disturbing ‘other’. By the same token, from a Northern perspective, ‘Cockney’ could be used to denote any Londoner



**Figure 1:** No 24 in the picture postcard series *Yorkshire Arms, Toasts and Sayings* (pub. by E.T.W Dennis, 1907. Illust. by Jack Broadrick).

3 Fletcher, *Book About Yorkshire*, p.199.

4 Gareth Stedman Jones, ‘The “cockney” and the nation, 1780-1988’, in David Feldman and Gareth Stedman Jones (eds), *Metropolis London: Histories and Representations Since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp.272-324. Philip Howell has concluded that the late nineteenth century ‘reinvention’ of the Cockney produced a metropolitan working-class identity which ‘could come to rival that of the Industrial North and the provinces’ – see Howell, ‘Industry and Identity: the North-South divide and the geography of belonging, 1830-1918’, in Alan R.H. Baker and Mark Billinge (eds), *Geographies of England: The North-South Divide, Material and Imagined* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.85

5 Sir Alfred Edward Pease, *A Dictionary of the Dialect of the North Riding of Yorkshire*, with notes and comments by Major John Fairfax-Blakeborough (Whitby: Horne & Son, 1928).

or Southerner. It will be shown in a subsequent chapter that Yorkshire periodicals of the nineteenth century used the term in this generic, non-class specific fashion. Stedman Jones argues that the term ‘Cockney’ today has an old-fashioned quality and the same can probably be said of ‘Tyke’. But it has remained familiar, while an earlier expression, the ‘Yorkshire Bite’, has become obsolete. This was a term that never fully overcame its pejorative connotation, but this did not prevent it being embraced within Yorkshire. Indeed, much of the material promulgated by Richard Blakeborough and others confronts us with the phenomenon whereby a negative regional stereotype, perhaps one devised exogenously for satirical purposes, can be appropriated within that region as a central part of its identity. The most vivid example of this is the now obscure but once ubiquitous Yorkshireman’s Coat of Arms, which would be adopted by Blakeborough as his personal emblem. It is possible to trace the origins of this unusual piece of symbolism.

In 1888 a correspondent signed L.G.M. wrote to the *York Herald*. Referring to an image in front of him and adopting mock pomposity, he described what he called ‘a Yorkshireman’s Arms’ in strict heraldic terms.

Arms: Vert, ham pendant sa. between a flea proper in the dexter chief and a fly proper in the sinister chief; in base a magpie proper perched in a bough, from the end of which sprouts a spray of five leaves, all proper. The shield rests on a fox’s brush on the dexter side and a wisp of star on the sinister side, all proper. Crest, a demi-horse issuing from the back of the shield, couped at the shoulders, rampant, sa, collared brown. Supporters: Dexter, a huntsman clad in black cap, long brown coat, yellow breeches, and top boots, having a horn slung on his back, holding a hunting crop with a heavy lash in his right hand and in his left (which supports the shield and is extended behind it) a double-bridle. Sinister, a stableman in a black low-crowned hat, a short blue jacket, yellow breeches, blue stockings and shoes, holding in his left hand a currycomb, in his right (which is extended behind the shield) a rope halter, all proper. Motto, a red label, ‘Qui capit ille habet’.<sup>6</sup>

Beneath this heraldic device, reported L.G.M, was printed a verse, headed ‘A Yorkshireman’s Coat of Arms’:

*A magpie behold and a Fly and a Flea  
And a Yorkshireman’s qualifications you’ll see;  
To Backbite and Spunge and to Chatter amain,  
Or anything else Sir by which he can gain.  
The Horse shews they Buy few, tho’ many they steal,  
Unhanged their [sic] worth nought, does the gammon reveal.  
But let Censure stand by, and not Bias the Mind,  
For others as bad as the Yorkshire you’ll find.’<sup>7</sup>*

L.G.M adds that the publisher was given as O. Hodgson, Maiden Lane, Cheapside, and that he had encountered the image and the verses in a book he possessed entitled *The Yorkshire Dialect exemplified in various Dialogues, Tales, and Songs applicable to the County, to which is added a Glossary of such Yorkshire Words as are likely not to be understood by those acquainted with the Dialect*. It has not been possible to trace a book with the exact title given by L.G.M, but in 1828 Orlando Hodgson of Cheapside published *Specimens of the Yorkshire Dialect, by way of dialogue, containing A Dialogue between Gulwell, a London register office keeper and Margery Moorpot, a Country Girl, Awd Daisy, an Eclogue, a Cock and Bull story, the hireing, the Bellman of Ripon, The Yorkshire Tyke & c to which is added a copious glossary and the Life of William Nevison*.

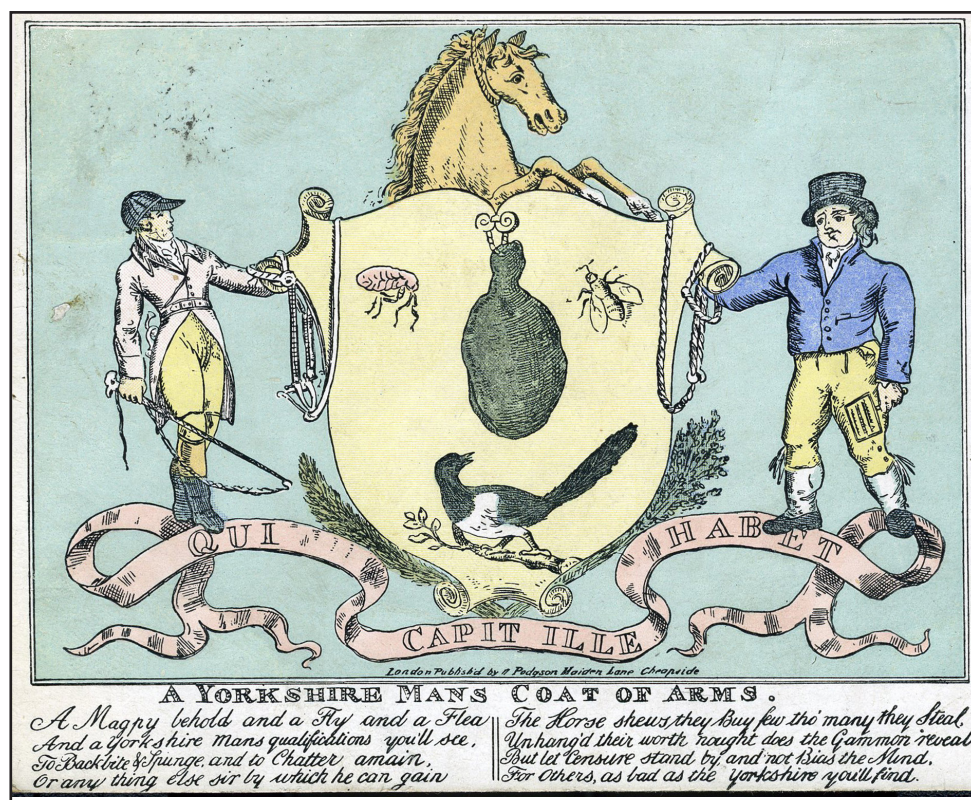
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6 ‘L.G.M’, ‘A Yorkshireman’s Arms’, *York Herald*, 8 December 1888.

7 Ibid.



**Figure 2: A**  
Yorkshireman's  
Coat of Arms  
from an  
undated picture  
postcard  
(posted 1905).



This book had originated at the beginning of the nineteenth century with a 12-page publication entitled *Specimens of the Yorkshire Dialect* etc printed and sold by C. Earnshaw, of Wakefield. Several poems in the collection, including *Awd Daisy*, although uncredited, were written by the Rev Thomas Browne (1771-1798), born in Kirkbymoorside, whose short career had included a schoolmastership in Pickering and the editorship of the *Hull Advertiser*, before he followed his father into holy orders. His *Poems on Several Occasions* were published posthumously and its sequence of 71 odes in Standard English was followed by five 'Specimens of the Yorkshire Dialect'. An anonymous writer of a preface to the volume wrote that 'these have been greatly admired by every one whose habits of life qualify him to appreciate their merits. In my opinion they contain the most faithful representations of modern rustic manners and the best imitation of rustic language that has yet appeared'.<sup>8</sup> Being a close contemporary of Robert Burns, it seems likely that the influence of the Scottish poet influenced Browne to try his hand at Yorkshire vernacular.<sup>9</sup> This was detected by the literary scholar and dialect writer F.W. Moorman, who felt that Browne had 'caught something of the Scottish poet's racy vigour'.<sup>10</sup> Browne's experiment was curtailed by his death but several of his dialect poems would have a lengthy if anonymous after-life as the core matter of the *Specimens of the Yorkshire Dialect* pamphlet – discussed in further detail below – which would be reissued verbatim in some 20 editions by a variety of publishers, mainly in Yorkshire, until the 1860s, by which time it was a thoroughly old-fashioned production.<sup>11</sup> The copy of Hodgson's 1828

<sup>8</sup> Introduction to *Poems on Several Occasions* by the late Rev Thomas Browne of Kingston-upon-Hull (Merritt and Wright: Liverpool and Thomas Browne: Hull, 1800), p.xi.

<sup>9</sup> For the influence of Burns on English dialect writing, see M. Vicinus, *The Industrial Muse* (London: Croom Helm, 1974), pp.185 and 189.

<sup>10</sup> F.W. Moorman, Introduction to *Yorkshire Dialect Poems* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1916), p. xxvii.

<sup>11</sup> In March 1868 an anonymous writer on 'Yorkshire Life and Character' in the magazine *Temple Bar* was probably referring to the *Specimens*... when he commented (p.487) that 'an old collection of dialogues

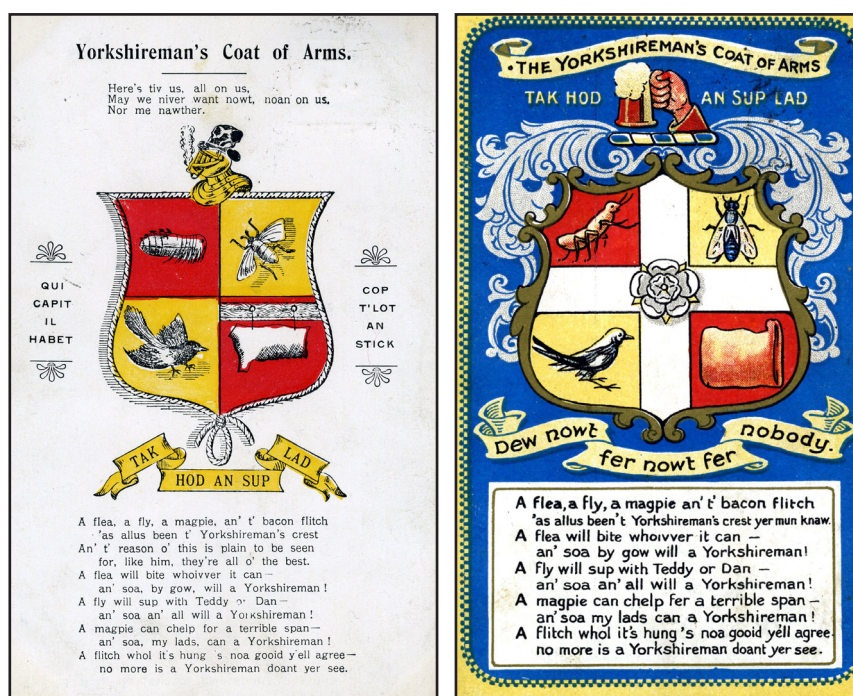
edition in the Hailstone Collection at the York Minster Library has no illustrations but some versions of the book – notably those of William Walker (Otley, n/d, 1840s suggested) and J.Kendrew (York, n/d, 1811 suggested), contained woodcuts. None of these was the Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms but when he wrote to the *York Herald*, L.G.M. provided a thorough description of what was probably the original version of the design. *Figure 2* shows what is almost certainly the image in question, or at least a close variant. This is taken from a picture postcard that was posted in

1905. It follows what became a humorous convention of adding a 'Yorkshire translation' of the Latin tag 'Qui capit ille habet' as 'Cop t'lot an stick'. The date of the postcard shows that the original design was still current in the early twentieth century, if rather antique in appearance, but by this time the Coat of Arms had become a stock image, with many variants. As a badge of Yorkshire and Yorkshireness it might have been as ubiquitous as the white rose in the later-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and can be encountered in many places, such as ceramics [*Figure 3*].

The picture postcard versions, of which two are reproduced here [*Figure 4*], show several design variants. But the curious assemblage of fly, flea, magpie and gammon remained and for several decades this was a widely deployed Yorkshire emblem, often used without exposition. It can be found, for example, on the cover of *The Yorkshireman's Almanac*, published by Walker's of Otley in 1905 [*Figure 5*]. The image had become a pictogram for Yorkshire. When the dialect writer John Hartley's character Sammywell Grimes paid a visit to London he painted the Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms on his trunk



**Figure 3:** Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms depicted on a saucer of twentieth-century production.



**Figure 4:** Variants of *The Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms* on early-twentieth century picture postcards.

and poems has been reprinted year after year by a sleepy country bookseller, illustrative of the "Yorkshire Dialect" because this is the only one of its kind".



on the grounds that ‘if onny Lunduner saw that flea-an-a-fly-an-a-flitch-o’-bacon they’d nooan mell on it’.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the ubiquity of the image was fully established by the 1870s and Yorkshire people regarded it as a potent, almost talismatic aspect of their identity.

From the evidence provided above, it can be deduced that The Yorkshireman’s Coat of Arms originated in the London publishing industry in first quarter of the nineteenth century, possibly on behalf of the publisher Orlando Hodgson.<sup>13</sup> In 1850 a writer in *The Literary Gazette* described the Coat of Arms as ‘a Cockney fling at the natives of the North Countrie’, adding that ‘with Cockneys, all Northerns [sic] are either Scots or Yorkshiremen’. The writer went on to assert that a fighting cock would be a more fitting emblem of the county:

For a Yorkshire Game Cock of the true breed will turn his tail upon none of his species; and as for a thorough-bred Yorkshire Tyke ... I feel confident that he would not only face three Cockneys, but would give them all, one after another, what he would call a ‘reet good benzilling’.<sup>14</sup>

If it is assumed that the writer, who signed with the initials M.A.D, was from Yorkshire, then his pugnacious final paragraph was an example of the deeply embedded tendency of Yorkshire people and indeed all Northerners to regard themselves as physically tougher and more aggressive than the population of Southern England. Helen M. Jewell has traced the origins and the persistence of this belief. ‘Life in the north had hardness about it. Small wonder that northerners see themselves as hard and resilient, and regard southerners as effete,’ she writes.<sup>15</sup> Dave Russell too has furnished a detailed analysis of Northern stereotyping and its longevity, furnishing a table entitled ‘Imagining the North’ which sets out internal and external images of Northern-ness.<sup>16</sup>

Whatever Yorkshire people’s self-image, it might still seem perverse that a contemptuous piece of satire, with an unpleasant iconography of flies and fleas and



**Figure 5:** Yorkshireman’s Coat of Arms incorporated into the cover of *The Yorkshireman’s Almanac* (William Walker: Otley, 1905). Special Collections, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds

<sup>12</sup> John Hartley, *Seets i’Lundun, A Yorkshireman’s Ten Days’ Trip* (Wakefield, W. Nicholson and Sons, [1876]), p.12.

<sup>13</sup> Jack Fairfax-Blakeborough (the son of Richard) claimed in two books that the image was designed by Thomas Tegg in London in 1818. He provides no evidence for this assertion, but Tegg (1776-1846), one of the most prominent publishers of his time, issued a series of ‘Jest Books’ that might have been a vehicle for such a satirical image, although my perusal of the Tegg ‘Jest Books’ that are kept in the British Library did not yield a Yorkshireman’s Coat of Arms. See Jack Fairfax-Blakeborough, *Yorkshire Days and Yorkshire Ways* (London: Heath Cranton, 1935), p.39; J. and R. Fairfax-Blakeborough, *The Spirit of Yorkshire* (London: Batsford, 1954), p.36. The dust jacket of the former book has an early but unattributed version of the Yorkshireman’s Coat of Arms, identical except in some small details to the Hodgson version.

<sup>14</sup> *The Literary Gazette*, 4 September 1850.

<sup>15</sup> Jewell, *The North-South Divide*, pp.208-209.

<sup>16</sup> Russell, *Looking North*, pp. 33-37. Russell also explores variants in Northern stereotypes, for example, that Lancashire ‘has been viewed as softer, friendlier and less financially oriented than its eastern neighbour. Similarly, the easy bonhomie and drink-fuelled cheerfulness of the Tyneside ‘Bob Cranky’ archetype sits a little uneasily with the slightly dour Yorkshire “tyke”’ (p.38).

allusions to horse stealing and capital punishment, should have been taken up with such enthusiasm by Yorkshire people. There were occasional attempts to interpret the symbolism in a slightly more positive light:

*A flea, a fly, a magpie, an' bacon flitch  
Is t'Yorksherman's Coit of Arms.  
A't' reason they've chosen these things so rich  
Is becoss they hev all speshal charms.  
A flea will bite whoivver it can –  
An' soa, my lads, will a Yorksherman!  
A fly will sup with Dick, Tom or Dan –  
An soa, by gow! will a Yorksherman!  
A magpie can talk for a terrible span, –  
An' soa, an'al, can a Yorksherman  
A flitch is no gooid whol it's hung, y'ell agree –  
No more is a Yorksherman, don't ye see.<sup>17</sup>*

But on the whole it would seem that Yorkshire people appropriated a negative stereotype with relish, making it part of their identity.

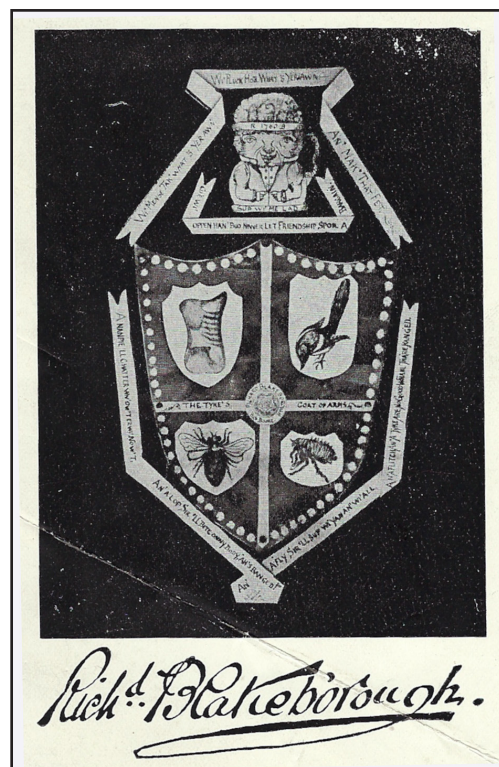
Richard Blakeborough had a particular fondness for the Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms, designing his own version, incorporating a facsimile of his signature, which he used as a book plate [Figure 6].

It is pasted on to several volumes of his journals.

He also wrote a version of the traditional accompanying rhyme:

*A Tyke and a fly, sir, 'tis very well known,  
Will drink with all comers from anyone's glass.  
And a Tyke like a flea, sir, will bite friend or foe.  
And a magpie and Tyke, with lad, sir, or lass  
Will chatter all day, whilst a Tyke, like a flitch,  
Is no good at all till hanged, sir; he be,  
So the Tyke's coat of arms for ages has been,  
A magpie, a flitch, a fly and a flea.<sup>18</sup>*

Blakeborough was born in Ripon in 1850, the son of a jeweller and clock maker who was prominent in local politics. A keen naturalist and collector of folklore from his youth, his earliest ambition was to become a doctor, but this was unfulfilled.<sup>19</sup> Instead he embarked on a career that included writing, stage acting and professional entertaining. He achieved some regional celebrity, gaining frequent notices in north Yorkshire newspapers. In common with the dialect writers, almanac authors and recitalists of the West Riding, Blakeborough – who spent most of his career in the North Riding or, indeed, County Durham – devised a stock Yorkshire character, an innocent at large whose misadventures could be chronicled. In his case this was an elderly working-class woman named Mrs Waddleton, who featured in a number of pamphlets in a series entitled 'Yorkshire Dialect



**Figure 6:** Richard Blakeborough's bookplate.

*Richard Blakeborough and John Fairfax-Blakeborough Yorkshire Folklore Collection at the National Centre for English Cultural Tradition, Sheffield University.*

<sup>17</sup> Anonymous verse from a picture postcard, no publisher nor date given. Early twentieth century suggested.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Fairfax-Blakeborough, *Yorkshire Days and Yorkshire Ways*, p.50.

<sup>19</sup> 'Pen Portrait' of Richard Blakeborough, *Yorkshire Notes and Queries*, Vol 1, No 11, February 1905, 329-330.

Readings', issued by The Yorkshire Publishing Press, Blakeborough's own imprint, based in Stockton-on-Tees, where he lived for the latter part of his life.<sup>20</sup> Despite this defection to Durham, Blakeborough was widely regarded as an epitome of Yorkshireness:

Mr R. Blakeborough delighted the audiences with his accomplishments as an entertainer... Especially was this the case in regard to impersonations of Yorkshire character in which Mr Blakeborough excels and upon which he brings to bear a complete mastery of the dialect, an inimitable turn for mimicry and a knowledge of Yorkshire people and their ways that can only have been acquired in the course of long experience. It is seldom that one witnesses anything so amusing as Mr Blakeborough's recitals of the adventures of a delightful old lady named Mrs Waddleton.<sup>21</sup>

Blakeborough's living was a precarious one, as his son recorded.<sup>22</sup> A source of income was to act as a paid guest/entertainer at North Riding country house parties. He thus sought the patronage of the region's gentry and his 1896 poem *T'Hunt o' Yatton Brigg*, a dialect version of a Dales legend about supernatural forces overwhelming a young man who had cheated a witch, was dedicated to Julia, Lady Middleton, 'than whom the writer knows of no other lady who so fully understands, and so thoroughly appreciates, the character and folk speech of the genuine Yorkshire man or woman'.<sup>23</sup>

Although well known to his regional contemporaries as a humorist, Blakeborough's most lasting contribution was as a collector of folklore. His most substantial book, *Yorkshire Wit, Character, Folklore and Customs* (1898) includes chapters on witchcraft, omens, birth and death.<sup>24</sup> He supplies a version of the *Lyke Wake Dirge*, once sung over corpses in the North Riding.<sup>25</sup> In his journals, Blakeborough acknowledged some of his sources, including childhood memories. 'Mrs Tebb and Dolly Parr were the first at whose knees I sat and listened to the stories they told of their youth, this would be about 1859'.<sup>26</sup> He also acknowledged Ann Caygill, Midge Pearson, Abe Braithwaite, Will Hird, Bias Race, Miss Waterhead, Bobby Gill.<sup>27</sup> These were mostly residents of Bedale and

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20 Titles in the Yorkshire Dialect Readings series included *Mrs Waddleton Dines with the Squire*; *Mrs Waddleton attends the Scientific Butter-Making Class* and *Ann Waddleton's Visit Ta Scarborough*. The pamphlets state that they are jointly published by Hunter and Longhurst, Paternoster Row London, and are also available in 'all railway bookstalls'.

21 *The Yorkshire Herald*, 26 February 1895.

22 Noel Fairfax-Blakeborough (ed.), *The Memoirs of Jack Fairfax-Blakeborough* (London: J.A.Allen, 1978), p.20. Jack Fairfax-Blakeborough OBE (1883-1976) – a decorated World War One army officer – was a writer, journalist and personality in the equestrian world. Many of his 112 books were on the subjects of horses and racing, but he also emulated his father with books that explored Yorkshire lore and humour.

23 Richard Blakeborough, *T'Hunt o' Yatton Brigg* (Guiseborough: printed for private circulation by J.T.Stokeld, 1896), p.2.

24 Library catalogues and second hand book sites list a number of publications written by Blakeborough but published after his death, on folkloristic subjects. Many of these books contain material extrapolated from chapters in *Yorkshire Wit, Character, Folklore and Customs*. The most recent example is *Yorkshire Witchcraft, Charms and Cures* (Church Stretton: Oakmagic, 2005).

25 See Blakeborough, *Yorkshire Wit, Character, Folklore and Customs*, pp.118-121. The dirge is still widely performed by revivalist folk singers and was set by Benjamin Britten in his 1943 song cycle *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*, although Blakeborough's text was not the one used.

26 Richard Blakeborough, *Journal 1883-1900*, Richard Blakeborough and John Fairfax-Blakeborough Yorkshire Folklore Collection [subsequently Blakeborough Collection] at the National Centre for English Cultural Tradition, Sheffield University, 97-005-BL 5.6. The term 'journal' is used here to cover what was a mixture of commonplace books and notebooks, with a diary element in earlier volumes, kept in a loose chronological order. The introduction to the catalogue of the Blakeborough Collection acknowledges that 'Richard Blakeborough's method of arranging his collections was idiosyncratic and makes the notebooks difficult to refer to'.

27 Ibid.



Guisseborough. In addition, he drew heavily on manuscript sources, especially a scrapbook compiled in the early 1820s by a Bedale schoolmaster named David Naitby. This came into the possession of Abe Braithwaite, ‘an inoffensive ne’er do well, now and again given to going on the spree’. When this man discovered that Blakeborough had ‘a mania for collecting old rhymes and superstitions’ he supplied him with individual items from the Naitby book, at the price of a pint of beer for every fragment.<sup>28</sup> This arrangement fell through eventually, but Blakeborough amassed a large quantity of folklore which provided much raw material for books and newspaper articles.

As a folklorist, Blakeborough has been accorded respect by recent historians of the subject. John Ashton compares him favourably to the ‘armchair’ folklorists of the Folklore Society in the late Victorian period. Blakeborough was one of a group of mainly Yorkshire dialectologists, local historians and folklorists who conducted research in the field, according to Ashton. They included Joseph Horsfall-Turner and Sydney Oldall Addy and they were at odds with some of the prevalent folklore theories, such as survivalism. Instead they subscribed to a perspective ‘whereby traditional expressive forms are regarded as social documents reflective of the attitudes, values, ideals, desires and fears of the groups for whom the materials were relevant’.<sup>29</sup> As shown above, Blakeborough drew heavily on manuscript sources – one manuscript in particular – so he might not have been quite such an egregious collector as Ashton suggests, but he would certainly have subscribed to the view that his material reflected the character and identity of the people and region from which it was drawn.

In addition to legendary folklore, Blakeborough was also an inveterate recorder of proverbs, toasts and philosophic utterances from the lips of North Riding people.

Since quite a boy I have jotted down any apt saying which I have heard. Many such, however, are so common that they daily pass the lips of our country folk. These characteristic Yorkshire sayings ... are worthy of greater consideration than they have hitherto obtained.<sup>30</sup>

Several of his manuscript journals include numbered sequences of proverbs, sayings, witticisms and religious sentiments. Some are rendered in Standard English, but most are in dialect. This is the material of Blakeborough’s that percolated into a wider market and had some national circulation. The assumption must be that the sayings which Blakeborough recorded and subsequently published had emanated from farmers or agricultural workers, but he provides little in the way of sources. In a manuscript journal inscribed ‘Yorkshire Oddments’ and dated 1897, there is a sequence of 65 numbered dialect sayings. Some are crossed out and are stated to ‘have been used by Morris. I sent them to him to write his chapter for me. The whole of these sayings have been collected by myself’.<sup>31</sup> This is a reference to Blakeborough’s fellow folklorist and dialectologist, the Rev M.C.F. Morris, who was the vicar of Newton-on-Ouse in the East Riding. In

<sup>28</sup> Manuscript headed *The Story of a Valuable Scrapbook*, Blakeborough Collection, Box 1.2.

<sup>29</sup> John Ashton, ‘Beyond Survivalism: Regional Folkloristic in Late-Victorian England’, *Folklore*, 108 (1997), 19-23. For a defence of the ‘armchair scholar’ in this field, see Georgina Smith, ‘Literary sources and folklore studies in the Nineteenth Century: A re-assessment of armchair scholarship’, *Lore and Language*, Vol 2, part 9 (1978), 26-42. For the role played by folklore study in nineteenth-century regional identity, see Joyce, *Visions of the People*, p. 180.

<sup>30</sup> Blakeborough, *Yorkshire Wit, Character and Folklore*, p.241.

<sup>31</sup> MS journal named *Yorkshire Oddments 1897*, Blakeborough Collection, 97-005 BL 4.2, p.3.

1892, Morris had published a book entitled *Yorkshire Folk-Talk*, which principally dealt with the dialect of the East Riding. He was one of the many authors and commentators cited in this thesis who, somewhat hegemonically, blamed developments in education and communication for the alleged decline of regional speech patterns. ‘Railways and certificated schoolmasters... are making sad havoc of much that is interesting and worth preserving in the mother tongue of the people’.<sup>32</sup> Morris’s book also included material on customs, superstitions and the Yorkshire character, so that it has a strong thematic similarity to Blakeborough’s later *Yorkshire Wit, Character, Folklore and Customs*.

The sayings listed by Blakeborough in his *Yorkshire Oddments* journal are unsentimental, sometimes to the point of harshness, such as ‘Thers a tahm for ivvery thing, even for t’pigs t’scream’.<sup>33</sup> The most frequently repeated motif is that of advice on the selection of a wife, with usefulness and capacity for hard work being seen as far more important than physical attractiveness. Romantic love plays no role in the process.

*Leeak at a lasses hams when thoos lating [seeking] a weyfe, deean’t be dazzled wiv a feeace.*

*Ah wadn’t saay much fo t’lass at chens [churns] wi buckles on her shoon.*

*T’weyfe at can hod her aud man up wit’ t’news ov t’village maistly bakes bont [burnt] bread.*

*A calling wife, a dusty spinning wheel.*<sup>34</sup>

The cumulative effect of this material verges on the misogynistic, but there is also the implication that passive femininity is no part of the rural Yorkshire identity and that fashionability in dress and appearance is an alien importation. This is made explicit in a poem written by Blakeborough entitled ‘T’Lass fra Lunnon’.

*Yan nivver ed seen sik a yan  
For dress an feathers, spick an span  
Sha was maistly t’match for onny man  
War t’lass fra Lunnon.  
Sha could raffle on an tell a taal  
Al put it’ shaad Jonah an t’whaal  
Bud sha cudn’t lug a hauf filled paal  
That lass fra Lunnon.*

.....  
*For fun an gam sha seeamed fair rife  
Bud wark sha wadn’t thruff her leyfe.  
Sha’d nivver mak a poor chap’s weyfe  
That lass fra Lunnon.*<sup>35</sup>

In 1907 the Scarborough firm E.T.W. Dennis and Sons published a book compiled by Richard Blakeborough entitled *Yorkshire Toasts, Proverbs, Similes and Sayings*. The Yorkshireman’s Coat of Arms was reproduced in the frontispiece and Blakeborough furnished an introduction.

The similes and proverbial sayings which so readily fall from the lips of the Tyke are worthy of preservation, as also of our closest scrutiny, they contain so much of the character and daily life as well as the religion of those who utter them. Glimpses, too, of other days and scenes we get,

32 M.C.F. Morris, *Yorkshire Folk-Talk* (London: Frowde and York: John Sampson, 1892), p.3.

33 *Yorkshire Oddments*, saying No 18.

34 Ibid., nos 21, 20, 32 and 46.

35 Richard Blakeborough, first and last stanzas ‘T’Lass fra Lunnon’, *Yorkshire Oddments*, pp.83-85. The poem is paired with one entitled ‘T’Chap fra Lunnon’ in which a patronising swell is bamboozled by canny Dalesmen.

when the domestic routine was so very different from that of our time. They one and all contain that subtle germ of hidden humour, praise or censure as the case may be, which is so peculiarly characteristic of the sayings of our county.<sup>36</sup>

Blakeborough, then, sees his compilation partly in a historic light, but also implies that the contemporary Yorkshire character and identity is reflected in the assembled aphorisms. The book follows a simpler plan than its title suggests.<sup>37</sup> Beginning with a sequence of three ‘Xmas sayings’, it then provides eight ‘Toasts’, followed by 108 ‘Yorkshire Sayings’. The toasts encapsulate a variety of supposed Yorkshire characteristics, including a hard-headed selfishness, a determination not be bested in any transaction and an insistence that women should be useful and not adornments. There is also an allegiance to a basic morality and a powerful loyalty to the county, to the extent of branding outsiders as ‘foreigners’. A selection of the toasts is given, with the original numbering:

II

Here’s ti ye an’ ti me,  
An’ ti mah wife’s husband,  
Nut forgitting mahsen.

III

Here’s tiv ivvery Tyke  
Wheea is trew tiv his wife,  
Trew tiv his sweetheart,  
Trew tiv his friends,  
An’ wheea nivver leyt yan frev another shire  
Ivver best him when swappin’ hosses.

IV

Here’s tiv ivvery Tyke  
Wheea nivver gav in tiv a jibbin’ hoss,  
An’ nivver teak ‘No’ frev a woman.

V

Here’s tiv him, be he Tyke or foreigner,  
Wheea can truly say  
He war nivver measthered  
Byv owther Hoss or Woman.

VII

Here’s tiv him, be he Tyke  
Or les fort’nate in his birth,  
Wheea lifts his glass tiv all ‘a’s good,  
To’ns his back on all ‘at’s bad,  
Tak’s toll frev ivvery bonny feeace,  
When sing’l  
An’ nivver strays fra t’home pasture  
When wed.

VIII

Here’s tiv uz all, an’ may wa ‘a’e  
Plenty ti eat,

36 Richard Blakeborough, *Yorkshire Toasts, Proverbs, Similes and Sayings* (London: E.T.W. Dennis, 1907), p.4. The book’s imprint provides an address for the publisher at Paternoster Row, London, but the company’s headquarters and its printing press were in Scarborough. It was the norm for regional publishers to provide a London address, either solely or in tandem with their actual address. Some of the larger Yorkshire publishing and printing houses, such as Nicholson’s of Wakefield and Watmough’s of Idle, did maintain staffed London offices.

37 The book does not, in fact, include any similes, but there is a long sequence of them in Blakeborough’s *Yorkshire Wit*.

A gret stack o'peat,  
 A sock full o' brass,  
 For yan's wife a strang lass,  
 A good fat pig,  
 An' a garden to dig,  
 A pair o'strang airms,  
 An healthy, good bairns,  
 A thack ower yan's head  
 An' neea lack o' good bread.<sup>38</sup>

The section of general Yorkshire sayings deals with themes of religion and morality, the contemplation of mortality, the importance of hard work and the need for care with money. Patriarchal, near-misogynistic attitudes to women figure in ten of the sayings. Some of them exhibit a kind of Biblical dread of the female:

Think on, t'signpost atween Heaven an' Hell is t'figure of a woman wiv oot-stretched airms, yan pointing up'ards, t'other doon'ards. That's woman, sha allus diz t'ane or t'ither.<sup>39</sup>

Ther's neea end ti t'len'th ov a woman's tongue: it can lap a man up, an' reach roon baith sides of an argyment.<sup>40</sup>

The book ends with a dialect poem that offers advice to a young man seeking a wife. As ever, practicality is the keynote:

*Bear I'mind when laatin',  
 A lass ti be thi wife,  
 Sha'll be a bit o'furnitur'  
 Thoo'll 'a'e to wear throu' life,  
 Seea aim ti pick when laatin'  
 What will thi kitchen greeace,  
 For if 't be good eneeaf for theear  
 'T'll pleease iv onny pleeace;  
 Bud if thoo laats a chaamer piece  
 Ti mazzle sense an' seeght,  
 Think on, afore thoo saddles on't,  
 Thoo's nobbut theear at neeght.  
 An' dowly wark thoo'll finnd it, lad,  
 If just at t'start o'life,  
 Thi een diz wed a bedmate, when  
 Thi heart s'ud wed a wife.<sup>41</sup>*

*Yorkshire Toasts, Proverbs, Similes and Sayings* was designed and marketed as a humorous book, although it contains moralistic, fatalistic sentiments that are far from light-hearted, such as T'plesures o' this life moistly paint 'Damnation' on life's last fingerpost';<sup>42</sup> or 'What's death? Why, it's the Lord's thorough cleansing time. It's when ivvery corner o' we hearts is to'nd oot an' dusted, an' it'll be a despert sad time fer some ez tha leeak on an' watch the'r awn dust heap grow'.<sup>43</sup>

Many of the sayings in the book can be traced to Blakeborough's journals, with some minor variations. Apart from a bracketed date after three of the sayings, implying a literary origin, Blakeborough provides no sources, so we cannot tell the level of his intervention

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38 Blakeborough, *Yorkshire Toasts*, pp.9-11.

39 Ibid., p.15.

40 Ibid., p.13.

41 Ibid., p.30.

42 Ibid., p.16.

43 Ibid., p.14.

– to what extent he ‘improved’ or indeed originated his material. Some of the sayings have the hallmark of overheard remarks, in public house, market place or chapel; others would seem to be worked up, reconstructed or even written from scratch. The North Riding dialect is used uncompromisingly, which suggests that the book would not be widely accessible, although copies remain in special collections and libraries throughout Yorkshire, implying at least a modest circulation. But the publishers of *Yorkshire Toasts, Proverbs, Similes and Sayings* plainly decided that Blakeborough’s material could be the basis for another venture that would take his material to a wider audience.

E.T.W. Dennis and Sons, a business founded in Scarborough in 1870, was a pioneer in the production of postcards. A relaxation of postal regulations in 1899 and the introduction of new printing technology meant that the picture postcard with a divided back for message and address entered what is widely described as a ‘Golden Age’ between 1900 and 1918.<sup>44</sup> The use of picture postcards as historical source material is well established, for the study of such diverse subjects as urban history, politics, popular entertainment, gender and race.<sup>45</sup> Regional identity can be added to this list, for not only was Britain photographed in immense detail and the consequent topographic or ‘real photo’ postcards distributed by the hundreds of thousands – thus familiarising more people than ever with the nation’s geographic, architectural and cultural diversity – but there was a sub-genre of illustrated cards which propagated regional stereotypes, usually to humorous effect. These generally took the form of dialect expressions with an accompanying illustration. Devon and Yorkshire were the most frequently represented counties.<sup>46</sup>

A number of Yorkshire publishers issued cards illustrating sayings and versions of the Yorkshireman’s Coat of Arms,<sup>47</sup> but E.T.W. Dennis made a speciality of the dialect card and did so as the result of having published Blakeborough’s book of sayings. From 1907, the firm issued at least 57 cards in a series entitled ‘Yorkshire Arms, Toasts and Sayings’. The cards were numbered, to encourage collectors engaged in what was a hugely popular hobby during the Edwardian period.<sup>48</sup> Many of the dialect sayings on the Dennis cards were lifted directly from Blakeborough’s compilation. He is credited and his copyright is asserted on some of the cards.<sup>49</sup> But, as shown above, much of the material in the book

44 Anthony Byatt, *Picture Postcards and Their Publishers* (Malvern: Golden Age Postcard Books, 1978), p.13.

45 Seamus Kerns, ‘Picture Postcards as a Source for Social Historians’, *Saothar*, Vol 22 (September 1997), 128-133; Eric J.Evans and Jeffrey Richards, *A Social History of Britain in Postcards, 1870-1930* (London: Longman, 1980); Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, Vol I (London: verso, 1994), pp.353-354; Estelle Pearlman, ‘The Representation of Jews on Edwardian Postcards’, *Jewish Culture and History*, Vol 6, No 1 (January 2000), 217-242; Rebecca Preston, ‘“Hope you will be able to recognise us”: the representation of women and gardens in early twentieth century British “real photo” postcards’, *Women’s History Review*, Vol 18, Issue 5 (November 2009), 781-800.

46 A.W. Coysh, *The Dictionary of Picture Postcards in Britain, 1894-1939* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club, 1984), p.130.

47 They included T.N.Leggett of Halifax and H.C.Glen & Co of Leeds. Thousands of cards were published which depicted the coats of arms of British towns. The Halifax firm Stoddard and Co specialised in these. The Yorkshireman’s Coat of Arms was possibly seen as a humorous subversion of these widely-collected ‘heraldic’ cards.

48 For the scale of postcard production and the hobby of collecting see Frederick Alderson, *The Comic Postcard in English Life* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1970), pp.14-15.

49 For example, No 18 in the series. Below the heading ‘Greetings fra Yorkshire’ is the toast ‘Maay what ye ‘a’e just reeght weel fet ya/ An’ all ya need the Good Lord get ya’. This was the first of the ‘Xmas Sayings’ in



*Yorkshire Toasts, Proverbs, Similes and Sayings* was rendered in a dense dialect and contained sentiments that might have seemed too serious for what was plainly intended to be a series of light-hearted Yorkshireisms for potentially a nationwide audience. Therefore, many of the ‘Yorkshire Arms, Toasts and Sayings’ cards contained expressions and aphorisms sourced elsewhere or possibly especially composed.

The most significant entries are a cycle of cards that began with No 6 in the series – ‘A Yorkshireman’s Advice to His Son’:

*See all hear all say nowt  
Eat all drink all pay nowt  
And if ever tha does out [sic] for nowt  
Allus do it for thisen.<sup>50</sup>*

This injunction – allowing for no generosity of spirit – would become one of the best-known of all Yorkshire sayings, widely reproduced and still familiar. As with the Yorkshireman’s Coat of Arms, we find a negative stereotype being enthusiastically adopted as a component of Yorkshire’s regional identity.

Passing allusions in periodicals make it clear that the scenario of a Yorkshire father bestowing materialistic advice on his son had been current since at least the early-nineteenth century. For example, in 1831 a correspondent to the *Morning Post* criticised the alleged demagoguery of both Daniel O’Connell and General Lafayette by stating that it was ‘very much like the Yorkshire man’s advice to his son on going into business – “My son, get money honestly if you can, BUT, my son, get money”’.<sup>51</sup> In 1879, a writer in the Middlesbrough *Daily Gazette* referred to ‘the refrain of the Yorkshireman’s advice to his son – “Proputty! Proputty! Proputty!”’<sup>52</sup> In fact, this was drawn from Tennyson’s 1869 Lincolnshire dialect poem *Northern Farmer, New Style*, in which a father instructs his son to marry for money rather than romantic love.<sup>53</sup> This is a reminder that regional stereotypes do not neatly observe county boundaries and that the line between general Northern-ness and a more specific Yorkshire identity can be blurred. But Yorkshire was the most usual repository for these stereotypes and they were often adopted with enthusiasm within the county as a badge of identity.

The ‘Yorkshireman’s Advice to His Son’ in the verse form given above is not to be found in Richard Blakeborough’s published compilation of sayings but a variant does occur in one of his manuscript journals, amongst a collection of expressions described as ‘Wise Saws North Riding’. It is rendered as

*Hear all, see all say nowt  
Eat all, sup all pay nowt  
An when ya deea owt fer nowt  
Deea’t foor yersen.<sup>54</sup>*

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Blakeborough’s compilation.

50 From picture postcard ‘Yorkshire Arms Toasts and Saying Series, No 6’, published by E.T.W. Dennis and Sons, illustration dated 1907.

51 *Morning Post*, 21 January 1831.

52 Middlesbrough *Daily Gazette*, 14 February 1879.

53 The poem begins:

‘Doesn’t thou ‘ear my ‘erse’s legs as they canters away?  
Proputty, proputty, proputty – that’s what I ‘ears ‘em saay.’

54 Richard Blakeborough, journal dated 1883-1900, Blakeborough Collection 97-005 BL 5.1-5.6, p.173.

The Advice might therefore have been a genuine Yorkshire folk saying, belonging to the unsentimental strand to be found in Blakeborough's collection.<sup>55</sup> Converted into a more accessible style of dialect it became widely known and the picture postcard version would be followed by a sequence of intra-family advice sessions [Figure 7]. In the absence of any evidence of folk origin for these verses, it can be suggested that they were written to order – possibly by Richard Blakeborough himself – as a follow-up to the success of the 'Yorkshireman's Advice to His Son'. Although obviously intended as humorous exploitations of an established set of Yorkshire stereotypes, they accord with some of the themes to be found in Blakeborough's collection of sayings, in particular the utilitarian attitude towards marriage. In the postcards, the womenfolk are allowed a voice and display a similarly unsentimental attitude.

The 'Yorkshire Arms Toasts and Sayings' series was illustrated by a commercial artist named Jack Broadrick.<sup>56</sup> His illustrations are signed and sometimes dated. For the 'Advice' sequence of cards he depicts the characters in a similar interior – the stone-floored kitchen of what was probably a farmhouse. A measure of prosperity is evident and a blazing fire in the background lends an air of contentment and comfort. Yorkshireness here is rural and timeless. Industrialisation and modernity have made little or no incursion. This is especially the case in the first image of the Advice cards. The Yorkshireman – whom we can regard as an archetype – is a bald, pot bellied farmer, wearing a smock and smoking a long clay pipe. His son is a precocious youth wearing riding gear, holding a crop and smoking a cigarette and is completely responsive to his father's nihilistic advice. Broadrick either created or perpetuated a stock image, for variants on the figure of the father and son can be encountered to the present day [Figure 8]. The idea of Yorkshireness crystallised by Richard Blakeborough and disseminated by E.T.W. Dennis and Sons still has purchase.

Of the substantial number of extant early-twentieth century Yorkshire dialect cards that I have examined, several had gone through the postal system. Most of them were posted and presumably purchased within Yorkshire. Some were sent to other Yorkshire addresses, others to recipients in other parts of the country, including London and Liverpool. The numbers are not sufficient for a meaningful quantitative analysis, but it is possible to reconstruct two scenarios – a visitor to Yorkshire, or a resident, seeking to amuse and instruct someone elsewhere in the nation with a humorous summation of the supposed characteristics of the county; and, more interestingly, one Yorkshire person taking pleasure in celebrating a shared sense of identity with another. The fact that this identity was not an especially edifying one perhaps added to the appeal. But there was at least some disquiet in nineteenth-century Yorkshire over the county's characterisation as being hard-headed, grasping and adept at double dealing. This can be seen by tracing

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55 It is possible that the verse is a faint parody or subversion of the Four Alls, originally a medieval concept of society – the peasants who worked for all, priests who prayed for all, knights who fought for all, and kings who ruled all. The Four Alls of Methodism would have been more widely known by the late-nineteenth century – 'All need to be saved. All can be saved. All can know that they are saved. All can be saved to the uttermost'. The Four Alls is also a fairly common pub name.

56 No biographical information has been discoverable for this artist. It is possible he used an alias, although the surname Broadrick does occur in the North Riding. It can be deduced that he was based in Scarborough – home of the publishing firm E.T.W. Dennis – from the fact that I have encountered a 1906 cartoon by Broadrick satirising that town's tramway system.





Figure 7: From the 'Yorkshire Arms, Toasts and Sayings' series illust. by Jack Broadrick and pub. by E.T.W. Dennis, Scarborough, 1907-1908.

the progress of the terms 'Yorkshire Tyke' and 'Yorkshire Bite'. During the nineteenth century, 'Tyke' (sometimes 'Tike') and 'Bite' jostled with each other as the favoured slang term for a person from Yorkshire. 'Tyke' eventually became a neutral term that carried no other meaning than simply a Yorkshire person – this is essentially the case in Richard Blakeborough's 'Yorkshire Toasts' – but it long carried a pejorative connotation. Indeed, despite his regional pride, in the glossary to the dialect section of his *Yorkshire Wit, Character, Folklore and Customs*, Blakeborough himself furnished a definition of



'Tyke' as 'a disreputable fellow; the name given to a Yorkshireman'.<sup>57</sup> 'Tyke' originated as a late Middle English term for a dog, usually meant contemptuously. By the early-seventeenth century it was being used as an abusive term for a Northerner. Thomas Deloney's proto-novel *Thomas of Reading* has a character referring contemptuously to one Cuthbert of Kendal as 'that Northern tike'.<sup>58</sup> At this stage the meaning of 'tike' had become 'a low-bred, lazy man, surly, or ill-mannered fellow; a boor'.<sup>59</sup> By the later-seventeenth century 'Tyke' was increasingly being attached to Yorkshire. In 1675 a Royalist account of the Civil Wars refers to one of the regicides as 'Peregrine Pelham, a Yorkshire Tike, not of the Sussex-Family...'.<sup>60</sup> In 1699 a dictionary of low-life terms 'useful for all sorts of people (especially foreigners) to secure their money and preserve their lives' defined 'Yorkshire-Tike' as 'a Yorkshire manner of Man'.<sup>61</sup> The definition might seem vague and tautological but it implies that by this time there was a certain style of behaviour associated with Yorkshire.

In 1673 an equestrian book by Robert Almond contained material which indicated that the association of Yorkshire with trickery and horse stealing was well established.

There are several Jockeys in every County of England, but none so expert as such as were spawned in Yorkshire, who have generally such natural love for their horses, that their inclinations lead them to ride before they can well go: this makes them generally more knowing in Horses than others, not only as to riding, but as to the several humours and constitutions. It is proverbially said, that Shake a Bridle over a Yorkshire-Tike's grave and he will rise again. I dare not justifie the truth hereof but this I may, That many of them will not long be without an Horse if they have but money enough to purchase a bridle; as for a Saddle, they can make that themselves, some little (and yet so commodious) that they can carry it in their breeches without discovery. Further, to prove them Horsemen even from their Cradles; look into the Inns, especially of London, and for one Hostler of any other Country, you shall find ten either of Yorkshire or Lancashire; and they are naturally very subtle and crafty.<sup>62</sup>

Almond went on to provide an account of the various tricks used by these men in order to misrepresent a horse, one of which was to make it appear lively by forcing it to swallow a live eel. The association between Yorkshire and horse stealing persisted until well into the



**Figure 8:** The Yorkshireman and his son, depicted on a mug of mid-twentieth century production.

57 Blakeborough, *Yorkshire Wit*, p.484.

58 Thomas Deloney, *Thomas of Reading, or The sixe worthy yeomen of the west* (London, 1612), npn. The book has a Yorkshire character, Hodgekins of Halifax, and a mythical explanation is furnished for the Halifax Gibbet Law.

59 *OED*.

60 James Heath, *A chronicle of the late intestine war in the three kingdoms of England Scotland and Ireland...* (London: Thomas Basset, 1675), p.199.

61 B.E. Gent, *A New Dictionary of the Terms Ancient and Modern of the Canting Crew* (London: W.Hawes, 1699).

62 Robert Almond, *The English horsman [sic] and complete farrier...* (London: Simon Miller, 1673), pp.354-355.

nineteenth century, and was the basis for the original Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms.

The year 1805 saw the first performance of a play by the Durham-born Thomas Morton (1765-1838) entitled *The School of Reform or How to Rule a Husband*. One of the central characters is the roguish Robert Tyke, a convicted horse-stealer. It is nowhere explicitly stated that he is a Yorkshireman, but Tyke's dialogue is written in a mild generic dialect – for example he addresses men as 'Sur' and states that he comes 'fra t'other side of watter'.<sup>63</sup> The play was a considerable success and would continue to be performed for much of the nineteenth century, often with a revised title such as *The Heir of Avondale, or the Yorkshire Horsestealer* or simply *The Yorkshire Horsestealer*. In 1865 a production with the latter title opened at the City of London Theatre.<sup>64</sup>

According to Richard Blakeborough's son, Jack Fairfax-Blakeborough, a noted equestrian writer, 'the allusion to horse-stealing is not without Assize trial and gallows records in substantiation'.<sup>65</sup> But there was a contrapuntal, even contesting image of Yorkshireness and the Tyke that had evolved by 1800. This was the Yorkshire person as country bumpkin, innocent in the ways of the world. As stated above, the early-nineteenth century saw the publication by the Wakefield printer C.Earnshaw of a short book with the full title

*Specimens of the Yorkshire Dialect, as spoken in The North Riding; By way of Dialogue; Between Gulwell, a London Register-Office Keeper and Margery Moorpot, a Country Servant Girl; and Between Georgy and Robin, on the Death of an Old Mare, called Daisy. To which is added A Glossary of Such of the Yorkshire Words as are likely not to be understood by those unacquainted with the Dialect*

This booklet provided the core material for a long sequence of editions of similarly titled offerings from a number of publishers nationwide. Common to all of them is the dialogue between Gulwell and Margery Moorpot, which has the latter in London, to which she had come to escape the amorous advances of her squire, replying to the former's job advertisement. She is unaware that her speech has made her a figure of fun. Asked how she likes Londoners she replies that they are

sike a set o' fowk as E nivver seen wi' my een. They laugh an' 'fleeer at a body like onny thing. Ah went nobbut t'other day t' beaker's shop for a leaf o' breead, an' they fell a giggling at me, as if Ah'd been yan o' t' grittest gawvisons i' t'warld.

*Gul.* Pray, what is a gawvison?

*Mar.* Whah, you'rn a gawvison for nut knawing what it is. Ah thowght yo Lunnoners hed knawn ivvery thing. A gawvison's a ninny-hammer...<sup>66</sup>

The Londoner Gulwell is perplexed by Margery's speech but quite prepared to chisel money from her as a down payment on a non-existent job as a housekeeper. Here it is

63 The role of Tyke was created by the York-born actor John Emery, one of the most famous 'low comedians' of his period. For an appraisal of Emery and his cultural significance, see Jim Davis 'The Sublime of Tragedy in Low Life', *European Romantic Review*, Vol 18, No 2 (April, 2007), 159-167. Davis recounts how Emery would play Shakespeare characters such as Caliban using a Yorkshire accent and was consistently criticised by Hazlitt for doing so. See also Jim Davis, 'Self-Portraiture On and Off the Stage: The Low Comedian as Iconographer', *Theatre Survey* 43:2 (November, 2002), 177-200.

64 *The Era*, 30 July 1865.

65 Fairfax-Blakeborough, *Spirit of Yorkshire*, p.37.

66 Anon, *A Dialogue between Gulwell, a London register office keeper and Margery Moorpot, a Country Girl*. This occurs in some 20 variant editions of *Specimens of the Yorkshire Dialect*. Few of the editions are dated. It is suggested that the earliest, possibly 1800, was from C.Earnshaw of Wakefield, and the latest was that issued as part of the Royal Pocket Library by Heywood of Manchester, Menzies of Edinburgh and Johnson of Leeds in the 1860s.



the Londoner, the Southerner who is dissembling and dishonest and the Yorkshire person who is gullible and trusting. Subsequent editions of the *Specimens* began to carry a poem entitled *The Yorkshire Tike*, which began:

*Ah iz i' truth a country youth,  
Neean us'd teea Lunnon fashions  
Yet vartue guides, an' still presides  
Ower all mah steps an' passions,  
Neea coortly leear, bud all sinceere,  
Neea bribe shall ivver blinnd me;  
If thoo can like a Yorkshire tike,  
A rooague tho'll nivver finnd me.  
Thof envy's tung, seea slimlee hung,  
Wad lee abbot oor country,  
Neea men o't'eeearth booast greater wurth,  
Or mare extend ther boounty.  
Oor northern breeze wi'uz agrees,  
An' does for wark weel fit uz.<sup>67</sup>*

This poem had originated as a song in the 1735 'ballad farce' *The Honest Yorkshireman*, written and composed by the Yorkshire-born Henry Carey (1687-1743).<sup>68</sup> Audiences at Drury Lane, where *The Honest Yorkshireman* was first performed, were probably expected to find its very title an amusing paradox – evidence that the duplicitous image of Yorkshire people was well established by the early eighteenth century. The song later entitled 'The Yorkshire Tike' is satirically delivered by the Yorkshire-born but London-acclimatised barrister Gaylove, who, for romantic reasons, is impersonating the more lumpen character Sapscurll, an amiable but dull-witted Yorkshire squire who has come to the capital aiming to marry the heroine Arbella. But when the song was taken out of this farcical context, rendered in a much thicker dialect orthography than Carey's original and reprinted in editions of the *Specimens*, its meaning was somewhat altered. It became an attempt to set the record straight about Yorkshire, alleging that envious tongues had been telling lies about the county, or 'country', as it is described (common and revealing usage at this period). There is a strong hint of resentment at the negative stereotypes of Yorkshireness that were now firmly entrenched. But the poem also creates an alternative interpretation of the 'Tyke' as a rural innocent, morally intact because uncorrupted by Metropolitan ways. The dualistic nature of the 'Tyke' – as either cunning rogue or Arcadian innocent – is united by an interpretation of the county, especially in London, as a strange and distant region, the epitome of rurality. This pre-industrial image would persist and was perpetuated by Richard Blakeborough and the populist material that he inspired.

If the term 'Tyke' began a journey towards non-pejorative status in the nineteenth century, the expression 'Yorkshire Bite' ensured the retention of an association between Yorkshire people and low cunning. By the early-eighteenth century, the word 'bite' – as both verb and noun – had acquired a slang definition of a hoax or deception and the perpetrator of such acts.<sup>69</sup> By the early nineteenth century it was commonly coupled with 'Yorkshire', helping to propagate the established image of the county's people as accomplished tricksters who were consequently immune to deception themselves. Eric

67 From 'The Yorkshire Tike', in *Specimens of the Yorkshire Dialect etc* (London: Orlando Hodgson, 1828), p.16.

68 Carey is best known for the song 'Sally in Our Alley'.

69 *OED*.

Partridge recorded a variety of expressions which sum this up. For example the phrase ‘to put Yorkshire upon’ somebody, first recorded in 1785, is defined as ‘to cheat, dupe, overreach, be too wide-awake for a person’.<sup>70</sup> The ‘antidote’ is ‘to be Yorkshire’ oneself or to proclaim that ‘I’m Yorkshire too’ (which could be rendered, in more recent slang, as ‘pull the other one’ or ‘you can’t kid a kidder’). The ‘Yorkshire Bite’ is a conceptual umbrella for all such expressions and it is frequently encountered in nineteenth-century printed sources. For example, in 1830 William Cobbett reminisced that

the appellation ‘Yorkshire bite’; the acute sayings ascribed to Yorkshiremen; and their quick manner, I remember, in the army. When speaking of what country a man was, one used to say, in defence of the party, ‘York, but honest’. Another saying was, that it was a bare common that a Yorkshireman would go over without taking a bite. Everyone knows the story of the gentleman, who, upon finding that a boot-cleaner, in the south, was a Yorkshireman, and expressing his surprise that he was not become master of the inn, received for answer, ‘Ah, sir, but the master is York too’!<sup>71</sup>

In 1834, a book entitled *Advice to Purchasers of Horses* was reviewed by the *Liverpool Mercury*, whose critic stated that ‘by implicitly following the author’s directions, the veriest Jemmy Green could hardly be taken in by the keenest bites in Yorkshire’.<sup>72</sup> In 1855, as part of a series entitled ‘Universal Proverbs’, the *Literary Gazette* explained that

‘A Yorkshire Bite’ expresses the sharpness of a Yorkshire man, and is used only on the confines of that and in the contiguous counties. The writer has heard the greatest apprehensions expressed by the farmers on the south side of the Humber about dealings with Yorkshire men.<sup>73</sup>

There are several variants of a story illustrating the alleged ability of Yorkshiremen literally to sell a dead horse. A collection entitled *The Ballads of Songs of Yorkshire* (1860) included ‘The Yorkshire Horse Dealers’, which recounts the exploits of one Tommy Towers, who succeeded in swapping his dead and flayed horse for a neighbour’s dying nag.

*Soa Tommy got t’better of t’bargin, a vast,  
An’ cam off wi’ a Yorkshireman’s triumph at last;  
For thof twixt deead horses there’s not mitch ta choose,  
Yet Tommy was richer by t’hide an’ foer shooes.*<sup>74</sup>

In 1879, the *Newcastle Courant* carried an article that explained the meaning of ‘Yorkshire Bite’. ‘Stories are told of Yorkshiremen exchanging blind and spavined beasts for very fair specimens of horse flesh and succeeding in making their victims imagine that they had dealt the best of the bargain’. The legend was illustrated with an anecdote which implies that the very boundary of Yorkshire was perilous to cross:

A tradesman, contemplating a journey to Yorkshire to buy goods, was warned by his friend that the Yorkshire people would be ‘too many’ for him. However, he thought that they could not be as bad as they were represented to be. Just on entering the county, on a rough road, his horse stumbled and he flew over its head. The horse, being frightened, ran away. The master got up as soon as his bruises would permit him and he went to seek his horse. He had not gone far before he found a dead horse, which had lately been skinned. Not doubting but it was his own horse, he cried out, ‘D- those Yorkshire bites, they have stolen the skin from my horse, saddle and bridle, shoes and all...’ so he went home, cursing the Yorkshire bites and swearing that there was no living amongst them.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (London: Routledge, 1984).

<sup>71</sup> *Cobbett’s Weekly Register*, 24 April 1830.

<sup>72</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 7 February 1834.

<sup>73</sup> *The Literary Gazette*, 1 September 1855.

<sup>74</sup> ‘The Yorkshire Horse-Dealers’ in C.J.Davison Ingledew (ed.), *The Ballads and Songs of Yorkshire* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1860), pp.160-161. The editor states that the song was a popular part of the repertoire of John Emery, who had created the role of Tyke in *The School of Reform*.

<sup>75</sup> *Newcastle Courant*, 31 January 1879.

Most of this material is exogenous, collated here to in order illustrate the extent to which the concept of ‘The Yorkshire Bite’ and therefore a key aspect of Yorkshire identity permeated national popular culture during the nineteenth century. Within Yorkshire itself, there were mixed feelings about this image. As already argued in relation to the Yorkshireman’s Coat of Arms and some of Richard Blakeborough’s material, there was a tendency to embrace such material as part of regional identity. The belief that the rest of the country regarded the county with respectful trepidation was a seductive one. In 1874 the *Bradford Observer* published the text of a ballad entitled ‘The Happy Ploughboy’, which occurs elsewhere under the title ‘Yorkshire Bite’. In this song a Yorkshire boy is employed by a Hertfordshire farmer. Taking a cow to market he is robbed by a highwayman, but the boy makes off with the latter’s horse, saddlebags and pistols, getting the best of the bargain.

*The master he laughed till his sides he had to hold.  
He says, ‘For a boy thou hast been very bold:  
As for the villain, thou hast served him right,  
Thou has put upon him a clean Yorkshire bite.’<sup>76</sup>*

All of this material demonstrates how deeply entrenched, within and without the county, was the perception of Yorkshire people as sharp-witted and sometimes dishonest. The standard definition of ‘Yorkshire Bite’ was the epitome of this. But there was an attempt to redefine the term. As early as 1831, a moralistic writer named J.Livesey asserted that

the misapplication of the original of this term [Yorkshire Bite] is very general. We always use it to convey a feeling of mistrust; or a fear of coming into contact with one more adept or cunning than ourselves. It is true Yorkshiremen are keen dealers; this, however, is no detraction; on the contrary, it may be evidence of industrious habits. The hospitality for which they are so famous, gave rise to the term ‘Yorkshire bite’. It is said the fatted calf and generous feelings greet the stranger at every step, and, after the common salutation, will you bite? Or, will you sup? is sure to follow; and from this originated a term, used as sarcasm, but which, in point of fact, ought to be used as a compliment.<sup>77</sup>

In 1877, the London publisher William Tegg repeated this definition verbatim in a mass market publication.<sup>78</sup> It was adopted with some enthusiasm by a number of Yorkshire periodicals. In a series entitled ‘Yorkshire Rhymes and Proverbs’, Reginald W. Corless vouched for it.<sup>79</sup> Commenting on a splendid display of foodstuffs in a Christmas window display, a Hull newspaper in 1881 wrote that ‘This is a true “Yorkshire bite”’.<sup>80</sup> The East Riding folklorist John Nicholson acknowledged that ‘Yorkshire bite’ ‘signifies keenness in the way of over-reaching’ but he added that ‘it probably has its origin in the proverbial Yorkshire hospitality’.<sup>81</sup> In view of the much greater weight of philological and customary evidence for a definition of ‘Yorkshire bite’ as trickery or double-dealing, the attempt to

76 *Bradford Observer*, 28 March 1874. The extent of this folk song’s distribution is illustrated by the fact that, as ‘The Yorkshire Bite’, a close variant was collected in early twentieth century New Jersey by Helen Hartness Flanders, whose ballad collection is kept at Middlebury College, Vermont. The song was sung to her by a student who had learned it from his grandfather in the Catskill Mountains –[ <http://middarchive.middlebury.edu/index.php>, accessed 1 June 2010].

77 *Moral Reformer, and Protestor Against the Vices, Abuses, and Corruptions of the Age* (Preston: J.Livesey, 1831), p.60.

78 William Tegg, *One Hour’s Reading, Remarkable Customs, Seasons and Holidays, Epithets and Phrases* (London: William Tegg and Co, 1877), p.216.

79 *The Yorkshireman* (Bradford), 6 October 1877.

80 *Hull Packet and East Riding Times*, 23 December 1881.

81 John Nicholson, *Folk Lore of East Yorkshire* (London: Simpkin Marshall; Hull, A. Brown, 1890), p.98.

reinscribe it as evidence of hospitality has an element of wishful thinking. On questions of food and hospitality there is mixed evidence from E.T.W. Dennis's series of Yorkshire postcards. One of them depicts, without irony, 'A Yorkshire Menu', which consists of a bounteous feast of regional specialities. But No 24 in the Yorkshire Arms, Toasts and Sayings series illustrates a family at dinner, with the father pronouncing 'Yan at eats maist pudden gets maist meeat' – the point being that inexpensive Yorkshire pudding would be served as a first course, in the hope that little appetite would be left for meat. Issues of Yorkshire alimentary regionalism will be considered further in Chapter 3.

Equivalents to the Tyke or the Yorkshire Bite can be found in other regions, countries and cultures and the comparison is sometimes explicit. In 1830, *The Gentleman's Magazine* wrote that, 'We generally apply the term Yankee to all Americans; but its specific meaning beyond the Atlantic is a native of New England, and is synonymous with a Yorkshire Bite in England'. There has been more recent exploration of the relationship between the Tyke and the 'shrewd, independent, cautious, laconic New Englander'.<sup>82</sup> So we cannot claim Yorkshire exceptionalism. But the county did acquire an exceptionally large roster of images and stereotypes, some generated folkloristically, some the result of conscious literary effort.

## Conclusion

This chapter has traced the evolution of some of the essential elements of Yorkshireness. By the nineteenth century, 'Tyke' could denote either a ruthless horse stealer or a rustic simpleton. However, the well-used term 'Yorkshire Bite' ensured that the county's traditional reputation endured. The Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms, which became ubiquitous by the late-nineteenth century, was an elaborate satire expressing a conventional view of Yorkshire rural mendacity, but this negative symbolism was readily taken up within and throughout the county and for some years it was a totemic emblem. Some of the less-edifying stereotypes were promulgated by Richard Blakeborough, an unusual combination of diligent folklorist and professional entertainer. Aphorisms such as the 'Yorkshireman's Advice to His Son' had an enthusiastic reception throughout the county. The psychology of this is that people will commonly prefer to be regarded as hard-headed, difficult to fool and always able to get the better of others. But the county's identity – exogenous and endogenous – was well-defined at an early date and remained so, with nuances, for several hundred years. It provided the raw material for populist expressions of Yorkshireness, harnessing such media as humorous picture postcards, which introduced these stereotypes and auto-stereotypes to a wide regional and national audience. Within Yorkshire itself, symbols and sayings, such as the Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms and Blakeborough's North Riding aphorisms, were transmitted by intra-county migration or were readily adopted in the urbanised West Riding, even though their social and behavioural relevance was diminished in the industrial setting.

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82 Doris E. Marrant, 'Some Functions of Narrative in Yorkshire', *Folklore*, Vol 97, No 3 (Autumn, 1968), 202-216.



# Themes of identity in nineteenth-century Yorkshire newspapers

## 1. 'Peculiarly interesting to Yorkshiremen' – the emergence of a county press

THE final abolition of the various 'taxes on knowledge', by 1861, resulted in an expansion in the scale and scope of a local and provincial press that has the potential to be a fruitful source for Yorkshire self-perception and auto-stereotyping. The purpose here, therefore, is to take samplings from Yorkshire newspapers of the later-Victorian period. It is an exercise that enables the exploration of a wide range of topics which fed into the county's identity and which, in many cases, play an active role in Yorkshireness to the present day.

The emergence of Leeds-based daily newspapers, in particular *The Leeds Mercury* and *The Yorkshire Post*, which aspired to county/regional status, is central to this study, as is the role of spectator sport, especially county cricket, which was represented to most people via the press. Lord Hawke, captain of the Yorkshire County Cricket Club and one of the most celebrated men in the county during the Victorian and Edwardian periods, will be used as the catalyst for a discussion of three topics – the impulse to create a sense of Yorkshire pride and identity by enumerating and memorialising its famous men and women; the supposed rivalry between Lancashire and Yorkshire and whether or not a serious sense of 'otherness' was developed; and the populism that is evident from the fact that a wide social spectrum of the entire county subscribed to a testimonial fund for the aristocratic and wealthy Hawke. This section will be followed by an appraisal of the extent to which the county's press constructed and disseminated ideas about Yorkshire character. This will include an analysis of cuisine as an aspect of identity, adapting the concept of 'alimentary nationalism'. This was principally coined for the purposes of exploring Scottishness, but I will show that it has relevance to English regional identities.

By the 1870s, the newspaper-reading habit was firmly established throughout the provinces, providing a huge impetus to local journalism.<sup>1</sup> In Lucy Brown's phrase, newspaper reading had become part of the 'normal furniture of life for all classes'.<sup>2</sup> London-published newspapers were widely distributed in the provinces. In January 1881 the Huddersfield Mechanics Institute reported that 'owing to the improved service of trains' the London papers were now received soon after 10am in its reading room. But the Institute also subscribed to a large number of Yorkshire newspapers and several from

1 Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p.356.

2 Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p.273.

Lancashire.<sup>3</sup> As yet there was no ‘national’ press in the later understanding of the term.<sup>4</sup> It was not until 1900, when the *Daily Mail* began to print a northern edition in Manchester that the first truly national daily newspaper was born – a symbolic moment, in the view of Andrew Hobbs.<sup>5</sup> The latter decades of the nineteenth century can therefore be described as a golden age for the provincial press, which had played a key role in agitating for the repeal of duties on newspapers, advertising and paper – a process that was, argues Alan J. Lee, an affirmation of provincial England against central authority and the metropolitan press. It was, he writes, ‘an agitation which pulled down some of the last obstacles to the provincial domination of the 1870s and 1880s.’<sup>6</sup>

It is true that several historians have cast doubt on the extent to which the provinces, in particular the North, truly did exercise any such hegemony over London and the South East.<sup>7</sup> But whatever retrospective interpretation is placed on the relationship between London and the provinces, there was a contemporary perception that the latter had come into their own and this was felt powerfully in the West Riding of Yorkshire and voiced by its writers. In an 1851 biography of his father, the politician and proprietor-editor of the *Leeds Mercury*, the Leeds journalist Edward Baines junior was able to pen a ringing declaration of provincial parity and occasional superiority:

The Metropolis does not in England, as in some other countries, form the head and heart of the body politic. London is, indeed, the glorious focus of intellect, as it is the seat of government. But thanks to both the democratical and aristocratical parts of our institutions, the provinces share very largely with London in influence, and often originate and sustain the movements that decide the national policy. Yorkshire, Lancashire and Warwickshire, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dublin, have at times been in advance of London, and have exercised great power over Downing Street and the houses of Parliament. The battles of Parliamentary Reform, Catholic Emancipation, the Abolition of Colonial Slavery, and the Repeal of the Corn Laws, were fought chiefly on provincial fields. Among those fields, the county of York has, on the whole, been the most distinguished.<sup>8</sup>

Such levels of self-confidence might mean, therefore, that Victorian provincial newspapers, whether published in large urban centres or small towns, are repositories of a great

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3 Fortieth Annual Report, Huddersfield Mechanics’ Institution, January 1881. *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily News* and *The Times* were the London papers received alongside *Leeds Mercury*, *Yorkshire Post*, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, *Huddersfield Examiner*, *Bradford Observer*, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Manchester Examiner* and *Liverpool Mercury*.

4 Michael Harris and Alan Lee (eds), *The Press in English Society from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries* (Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses: 1986), p.111.

5 Andrew Hobbs, ‘When the Provincial Press was the National Press c.1836-c.1900’, *International Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, Vol 5, pt 1 (2009), 16-43.

6 Alan J. Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press 1855-1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), p.49.

7 Howell, ‘Industry and Identity: the North-South divide and the geography of belonging’, pp. 64-87. C.H. Lee, ‘Regional Growth and Structural Change in Victorian Britain’, *Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol 34, No 3 (August, 1981), 438-452. The familiar view of José Harris is that from about 1870 a ‘gigantic hinge’ shifted ‘the fulcrum of economic life away from the northern provinces to London, away from manufacturing industry to international finance’ – Harris, *Private lives, public spirit*, p.19. Donald Read believes that by the end of the nineteenth century, ‘The fruitful balance between capital and provinces had been lost’ – D. Read, *The English Provinces C.1760-1960: A Study in Influence* (London, 1964), p. 244. P.L. Garside acknowledges that between 1820 and 1870, London did indeed appear to be economically, politically and administratively overshadowed by provincial towns but its ‘aggrandisement continued and its isolation from the mainstream of the industrial revolution ensured that its development remained unique’ – P.L. Garside, ‘London and the Home Counties’, in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950* (Cambridge, 1990), p.490.

8 Edward Baines, *The Life of Edward Baines* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans; Leeds: Reid Newsome, 1851), p.6.

deal of material reflective of the regions or provinces in which they were published.<sup>9</sup> Certainly, newspapers can and should be sampled as part of such a project, being important components of the print culture that is deemed vital to the construction of ‘imagined communities’.<sup>10</sup> Andrew Walker has expressed regret that periodical scholarship has made little or no sustained reference to English local and regional identity and the provincial press.<sup>11</sup> But the cultural distinctiveness of the provincial press should not be exaggerated. Indeed, Hobbs has argued that provincial and local newspapers in the nineteenth century effectively constituted a national press. For much of the period, provincial newspapers were dominated by news and other material from London. This was a tradition that originated in the eighteenth century, with the phrase ‘scissors and paste’ customarily used to describe the local journalistic practice of obtaining London papers and appropriating material.<sup>12</sup>

As the century progressed and the repeal of taxes and duties enabled the provincial press to expand, become more profitable and consequently employ larger writing staffs, these publications did become more reflective of their districts and regions.<sup>13</sup> But there remains a paradox that the exponential development of provincial and local newspapers can be seen as an element in the nationalisation of culture. For example, leading articles usually dealt with national or international affairs and were often supplied by London-based contributors. The development of the telegraph was a boon to newspapers in the regions, but it also made it simpler for them to fill their columns with centrally processed news.<sup>14</sup> Whole pages of news and advertising from London were despatched from London and interpolated into provincial newspapers.<sup>15</sup> The syndication of serialised fiction became an important element in weekly editions of provincial papers and during the later nineteenth century the market was dominated by the agencies of Leng in Sheffield and Tillotson in Bolton. On occasions, readers were furnished with fiction that reflected their own region and its speech patterns and such serialisations did foster a broad sense of Northern identity, according to Graham Law, although by the 1890s, fiction with imperial rather than regional

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9 The terms ‘provincial’ and ‘regional’ are used somewhat interchangeably in this chapter, although their meanings can be nuanced. Snell regards ‘provincial’ as having culturally derogative overtones – K. D. M. Snell, *The Bibliography of Regional Fiction in Britain and Ireland, 1800-2000* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p.3. For Ian Duncan, ‘The region... is a place in itself, the source of its own terms of meaning and identity, while the province is a typical setting defined by its difference from London’ – Ian Duncan, ‘The Provincial or Regional Novel’, in Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (eds), *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p.321. When proprietors of newspapers published outside London came together as a formal body in 1836, they called themselves The Provincial Newspaper Society and the terms ‘provincial’ and ‘country’ were used interchangeably in the society’s 1886 jubilee publication – see Hobbs, ‘When the Provincial Press was the National Press’, 20.

10 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

11 Andrew Walker, ‘The development of the provincial press in England c. 1780-1914’, *Journalism Studies* (2006), 7: 3, 373-386.

12 Donald Read, ‘North of England Newspapers (c.1700-1900) and their Value to Historians’, *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society* Vol 8 pt 3 (1956), 200-215. [202]. See also G.A. Cranfield, *The Press and Society* (London: Longman, 1978), p.178; Jeremy Black, *The English Press 1621-1861* (Stroud: Sutton, 2001), p.119.

13 Black, *The English Press*, p.125.

14 Hobbs, ‘When the Provincial Press was the National Press’, 30.

15 Ibid., 34 and Graham Law, *Serializing fiction in the Victorian Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), p.53.

themes had begun to predominate.<sup>16</sup>

If, however, there are limitations in the value of the content of nineteenth century Yorkshire newspapers for an appraisal of regional identity, and if they played some role in the nationalisation of culture, the fact that certain publications aspired to a countywide circulation and influence helps to provide evidence that a pan-county sense of identity was in existence or could be fostered.

An early newspaper to lay nominal claim to countywide status by incorporating 'Yorkshire' in its masthead was the weekly *Yorkshire Gazette*, which made its initial appearance on 24 April 1819. Printed and published in York by John Wolstenholme, as a stamped publication it was priced sevenpence and its imprint claimed that it was available on request at 'Booksellers and News Agents in this County'. As one would expect with a provincial newspaper of this period, its editorial content was to a great extent concerned with national politics and affairs. Its opening editorial expressed no regional or county agenda, but that it would advocate 'the cause of order and good government, the cause of freedom in its best and only sense, when connected with the principles on which society is established'. Its Tory credentials were further bolstered by the inclusion of a letter signed 'A.N.R. Farmer' which stated, 'I am glad to observe that in the Prospectus of your intended paper, you purpose paying particular attention to the landed interests of the Country [sic].'<sup>17</sup> The *Gazette* – vestigially in existence to this day – remained a weekly newspaper based in York, concentrating on North Riding affairs.<sup>18</sup> It would be the two principal newspapers of Leeds, the *Intelligencer* and the *Mercury* – Conservative and Whig/Liberal respectively – that staked the strongest claims to countywide paper status.

When the *Mercury* announced a new weekly supplement in 1845 it expressed its confidence that 'the reading and news-loving public of *Yorkshire* [my italics] will appreciate the improvement'.<sup>19</sup> It was the fact that the Leeds papers emanated from what the *Mercury* described as 'the commercial metropolis of this densely populated county' that gave them a sense of entitlement to represent themselves as county newspapers. There was now a tendency for institutions, organisations and publications in the populous and economically dominant West Riding simply to appropriate the term 'Yorkshire'.<sup>20</sup> This was evident when, in June 1866, the *Leeds Intelligencer*, which had begun publication in 1754, announced that it was to become a daily newspaper. Significantly it would be renamed the *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* – the latter portion of the title was subordinate and was dropped in 1883.<sup>21</sup> The choice of 'Yorkshire' as the principal component might have been a case of West Riding arrogance, but it suggests that a countywide identity was evolving. When it made its first appearance, on 2 July 1866, the new publication included a statement of intent. The *Yorkshire Post* would 'be at once Conservative and progressive

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16 Law, *Serializing Fiction*, pp.190-191.

17 *Yorkshire Gazette*, 24 April 1819.

18 In 1954 it merged with the York-published *Yorkshire Herald* and the paper was retitled the *Yorkshire Gazette and Herald*. It remains as a weekly publication and website named the *Gazette and Herald*, concentrating its coverage on Ryedale.

19 *Leeds Mercury*, 21 June 1845.

20 Neave, 'The identity of the East Riding of Yorkshire', p.189.

21 For the history of this publication, see Mildred A.Gibb and Frank Beckwith, *The Yorkshire Post, Two Centuries* (Leeds: Yorkshire Conservative Newspaper Co, 1954).



– a foe of democracy and revolution, but the firm friend of all constitutional reform’.<sup>22</sup> It promised detailed coverage of racing, field sports, coursing, cricket, rowing and ‘athletic amusement’. There was an additional promise that ‘sports more peculiarly interesting to Yorkshiremen will be made the subject of especial interest’ – although there was no further explanation of what these might be. There was also a promise of articles on the natural history of the county.<sup>23</sup>

As a manifesto for regional identity, this introductory editorial is disappointing, although the emphasis laid on sport is revealing. It is significant that the West Riding newspaper which adopted a masthead that proclaimed its countywide status was a Tory publication.<sup>24</sup> A sense of county rather than local identity had hitherto been restricted largely to the gentry.<sup>25</sup> The phrases ‘county set’ and ‘county family’ are vestiges of this, from the pre-Reform period in which a restricted electorate returned county MPs. The Yorkshire Association of the 1780s, which raised petitions for reformist causes, was essentially a group of gentry based in York, where assizes for the entire county were held. When the Association attempted to enlist support in the towns of the West Riding it encountered resistance and problems of communication – an ‘interpreter’ familiar with the dialect of Leeds was required, for example.<sup>26</sup> By the mid-nineteenth century, however, county identity was being shared or possibly contested by the North and West Ridings.

One of the arguments of this thesis is that in the later-nineteenth century, popular publishing played a role in disseminating and helping to construct a wider sense of Yorkshireness, incorporating most of the historic county’s territory and penetrating deeper into the social structure. The launch of a thoroughly Tory *Yorkshire Post* in 1866 might seem redolent of the older, North Riding, agricultural-interest, gentry-based sense of county identity – as exemplified by the earlier *Yorkshire Gazette* – but it carries clear signals for a fresh direction. The new daily paper was published in the heart of the industrial, mercantile West Riding, at a period when there was competition between Leeds and York for the leadership of Yorkshire. This was symbolised by a contested campaign to divide the county’s assize circuit and create a new West Riding assizes in Leeds. Opposition to this by Conservative peers was described by the *Leeds Mercury* as ‘gratifying the prejudices of the Yorkshire gentry against the Yorkshire manufacturers’.<sup>27</sup> The new *Yorkshire Post* – a Tory paper published in Leeds<sup>28</sup> – offered a synthesis of county

22 The *Leeds Intelligencer* established its ‘Tory radical’ credentials in 1830, when it published in full a letter by Richard Oastler after the *Leeds Mercury* had cut his material significantly. From this point, it was the *Intelligencer* that consistently supported Oastler’s campaign for factory legislation, while the *Mercury* gained a reputation among the working class as being the paper of their mill-owning employers – see Gibb and Beckwith, *The Yorkshire Post*, and Walker, ‘The Development of the Provincial Press’.

23 *Yorkshire Post*, 2 July 1866.

24 Until its acquisition in the 1990s by Johnston Press, *The Yorkshire Post* was owned and published by a company named Yorkshire Conservative Newspapers.

25 D. Hey, *A History of Yorkshire: ‘County of the Broad Acres’* (Lancaster: Carnegie, 2005), p.2. Neave, ‘The identity of the East Riding of Yorkshire’, p.186. Neave, who writes against Yorkshire cultural homogeneity and in favour of East Riding exceptionalism, also argues that all of the three Ridings of Yorkshire developed individual ‘county consciousness’ based around the towns where Quarter Sessions were held.

26 See Ian R. Christie, ‘The Yorkshire Association, 1780-4: A study in political organisation’, *The Historical Journal*, 3 (2), 1960, 144-61. Read, *The English Provinces*, pp.10-17.

27 *Leeds Mercury*, 18 June 1864.

28 For the political complexion of Leeds, less radical than its neighbour Bradford, see Asa Briggs, *Victorian*

identities, urban and rural. By placing emphasis on its coverage of sport it seemed to be pitching for a relatively leisured leadership. But increasingly, sport was playing a crucial role in constructing a wider, trans-class sense of Yorkshire identity. In the words of David Hey:

Most ordinary people did not acquire the gentry's sense of belonging to the county of Yorkshire until organised sport began to attract their loyalties. This began when cricket was actively encouraged by those who saw it as a peaceful, enjoyable and manly alternative to cruel sports and violent activities.<sup>29</sup>

Cricket was one of the litany of sports listed by the *Yorkshire Post* in its opening editorial. And cricket, it is widely argued, would be one of the most important components of an emerging Yorkshire identity. Dave Russell is a seminal proponent of this, asserting that 'Yorkshire County Cricket Club served as a crucial mechanism through which Yorkshire became known both objectively and perhaps more importantly, metaphorically and symbolically, to its own inhabitants and those beyond the county boundary'.<sup>30</sup> Russell uses 1890 as his starting point, partly because this was the year in which the county championship – at which Yorkshire CCC would excel – was formally established, but also because it was taken by José Harris as the point at which there was, allegedly, a subterranean shift in the balance of social life away from the locality to the metropolis and the nation. Russell argues that the success of Yorkshire cricket, achieved by players born within the county, allowed its citizens 'to allay some of the anger that they felt about Yorkshire's (and the north's) increasing cultural subordination to London'.<sup>31</sup>

Rob Light agrees that by 1900, cricket had come to be seen as an important representation of Yorkshire identity – indeed he has evidence which suggests that by the 1830s the game was already a conduit for 'the broadly agreed, self image of Yorkshiremen'<sup>32</sup> – but he places greater emphasis on the competitive, professional, working-class roots of the game in the county, which helped to attract genuinely popular support. This causes Light to question some of Russell's assertions that Yorkshire cricket had the most meaning to members of the middle and upper classes. Duncan Stone has examined the extent to which cricket could be used – particularly by those who wrote about it in the regional press – to construct or reinforce regional and class identities. In discerning 'a consistent narrative of Yorkshire cricket "from below"', Stone's conclusions incline towards Rob Light's analysis.

In Yorkshire, the comparatively late development of cricket in the region, high working-class numbers and autonomy, allied with a regional press happy to universally represent egalitarian

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*Cities* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p.153. For analyses of popular Conservatism in Leeds, see Matthew Roberts, 'Popular Conservatism in Britain, 1832-1914,' *Parliamentary History*, Vol 26, (2007), 387-410; "'Villa Toryism" and Popular Conservatism in Leeds, 1885-1902', *The Historical Journal* 49, 1 (2006), 217-246.

29 Hey, *History of Yorkshire*, p.384.

30 D. Russell, 'Sport and Identity: The Case of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, 1890-1939', *Twentieth Century British History*, 7 (1996), 206-230 [207].

31 Ibid., 229.

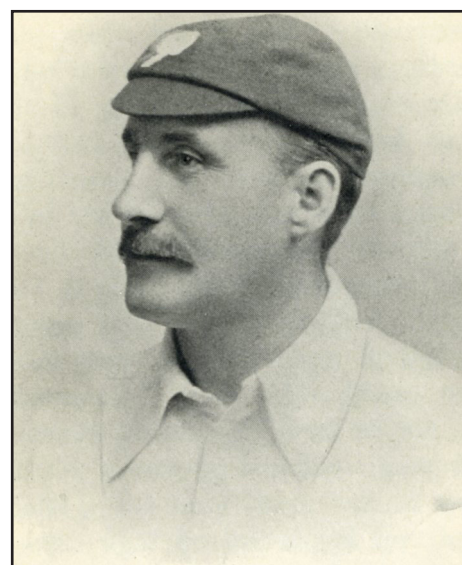
32 In 1829, Sheffield's Tom Marsden was trying to arrange a single wicket match with Fuller Pilch. Negotiations were conducted in the Press and at one point, according to the *Sheffield Independent*, 'Tom Marsden thinks the friends of Pilch have rather blinked his challenge...instead of replying to it in a Yorkshire like way...' – see Rob Light, '“In a Yorkshire Like Way”: Cricket and the Construction of Regional Identity in Nineteenth-century Yorkshire', *Sport in History*, Vol 29, Issue 3, September 2009, 500-518 [504].

‘Yorkshire’ or perhaps ‘community’ values helped to develop and promote a uniformed identity for Yorkshire cricket.<sup>33</sup>

So while there is consensus about the importance of county cricket in defining a Yorkshire identity in the nineteenth century, there is some debate about the nature of class engagement. This chapter proceeds to make a contribution by arguing that the figure of Lord Hawke and the aftermath of Yorkshire CCC’s victory in the 1896 County Championship provides a useful case study which helps to illustrate the role of the region’s press in propagating a socially heterogeneous sense of Yorkshiredness. The topic also enables a discussion of the importance attached to territorial origins as a component of regional identity and a consideration of the significance or otherwise, of Yorkshire-Lancashire rivalry. The following section, occasionally moving some distance from the cricket motif, will therefore employ the career and profile of Hawke as the framework for an exploration of various themes linked by the fact they were the subject of discourse in the county press.

## 2. ‘A grand example of a true Yorkshire gentleman’

Henry Martin Bladen Hawke (1860-1938) [Figure 1], who inherited his father’s title of Baron Hawke in 1887, is a well-known figure in cricket history, for his captaincy of Yorkshire between 1883-1910, for the large number of touring teams that he led overseas and his presidency of the MCC. Controversy surrounds his reputation, largely because of tactlessly patrician statements that he made later in life.<sup>34</sup> He has been described by a cricket historian as an ‘autocratic, opinionated, utterly self-confident sprig of the aristocracy’ with a weak playing record whose autobiography ‘must be one of the least modest works ever compiled’.<sup>35</sup> During Hawke’s Yorkshire captaincy, however, his innovations included the introduction of off-season pay and other benefits for professional cricketers. He was born outside the county, in Gainsborough, which caused Hawke to argue his Yorkshire credentials very fiercely. In his autobiography, after detailing his ancestry he writes:



**Figure 1:** Lord Hawke, from the frontispiece of his *Recollections and Reminiscences* (1924).

I should like to emphasise how entirely Yorkshire I am by descent. The great Admiral’s wife’s

33 Duncan Stone, ‘Regional Cricket identities: The Construction of Class Narratives and their Relationship to Contemporary Supporters’ in Robert Snape and Helen Pussard (eds), *Recording Leisure Lives: Sports, Games and Pastimes in 20th Century Britain* (Eastbourne: Leisure Studies Association, 2010), pp. 171-192. See also Duncan Stone, ‘Cricket’s regional identities: the development of cricket and identity in Yorkshire and Surrey’ *Sport in Society*, 11:5 (2008), 501-16.

34 In 1924, at the Yorkshire CCC AGM, Hawke said ‘Pray God, no professional shall ever captain England’. This caused such a furore that Hawke ‘practically went into hiding that winter’ – James P. Coldham, *Lord Hawke* (London: Tauris, 2003), p.184.

35 Derek Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket* (London: Aurum Press, 1999), pp.135 and 157.

family had been associated with my county from time immemorial. The wife of the third baron was a Hervey and the first wife of the fourth a Ramsden, both of Yorkshire, whilst it is also on record that my mother's people were Yorkshire since 1696 and no doubt earlier.<sup>36</sup>

In the context of county cricket, of course, place of birth was of special significance.<sup>37</sup> But Hawke's protestations of Yorkshireness reflect the great importance that was widely attached to territorial credentials. These were a source of fascination and debate in the county's press during the later-nineteenth century. For example, the long running 'Local Notes and Queries' column which began in the *Leeds Mercury* in January 1879 displayed a persistent preoccupation with the Yorkshire origins or otherwise of famous people in a variety of fields, proffering long lists of poets and other 'worthies', stretching back to the Dark Ages. Highwaymen such as 'Bold Nevison' and historical villains such as Guy Fawkes were entered into the roll call, alongside literary figures, clergy, inventors, politicians, industrialists and scientists, or people who had simply lived to a great age.<sup>38</sup>

Brian Doyle includes the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, begun in 1885, in a roster of projects that were, he argues, designed to foster a sense of English national identity.<sup>39</sup> I would argue that the antiquarians and local historians contributing lengthy lists and articles to the county's press describing or enumerating eminent Yorkshire people were collectively conducting an equivalent project in order to foster a Yorkshire identity. In 1878, Frederick Ross – a prolific historian and author whose works included *Celebrities of the Yorkshire Wolds* – published a prospectus for a proposed *Biographia Eboracensis*. It would consist of:

SKETCHES OF THE LIVES OF PERSONS CONNECTED  
WITH THE COUNTY BY BIRTH OR ANCESTRY;  
RESIDENCE OR TERRITORIAL POSSESSIONS;  
TITLE OR OFFICE; WITH  
FULL-LENGTH PEDIGREES OF NOBLE AND COUNTY FAMILIES.  
NOTICES OF AUTHORS WHO HAVE WRITTEN WORKS  
RELATING TO YORKSHIRE; AND  
ACCOUNTS OF ECCENTRIC CHARACTERS, REBELS, INSURGENTS  
AND NOTORIOUS CRIMINALS.<sup>40</sup>

The work would contain several thousand names and would be the product of 20 years' labour, wrote Ross. He boasted that 'the county of York stands proudly pre-eminent in the production of great men, especially in prelates, divines and scholars... the number of archbishops and bishops who have sprung from Yorkshire has been very much greater, even in proportion to the size, than any other county'. It would appear that Ross's Yorkshire biographical dictionary was never published, but the impulse behind it was

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36 Lord Hawke, *Recollections and Reminiscences* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1924), p.13.

37 Until 1992 Yorkshire CCC upheld a rule that only those born within the historic boundaries of the county could play for the club. In the early 1880s, however, a residential qualification was also permitted, allowing Hawke to play – see Coldham, *Lord Hawke*, p.39.

38 The subject of Pateley Bridge author William Grainge's 1864 book *Yorkshire Longevity*.

39 Brian Doyle, 'The Invention of English' in Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (eds) *Englishness – Politics and Culture 1880-1920* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p.95. Among the other initiatives enumerated by Doyle are the National Trust (1895), the National Gallery of Modern Art, later the Tate (1887); National Portrait Gallery (1896); the New (later Oxford) English Dictionary (1884-1928).

40 Frederick Ross, advertisement in his *Celebrities of the Yorkshire Wolds* (London: Trubner and Co, 1878), p.199. Rendered here as it appears in the original. Also quoted in 'Local Notes and Queries', *Leeds Mercury*, 1 February 1879.



significant and he continued to contribute frequent gobbets of biography and other items to 'Local Notes and Queries' until shortly before his death in 1893.

In columns such as 'Local Notes and Queries', any attainment was deemed to have special significance if a Yorkshire connection could be established. There is a touch of bathos in the claim that 'of the many thousands of Yorkshire men and women who are daily in the habit of wielding that small but powerful instrument the steel pen, probably few are aware that the most successful manufacturer of this useful and necessary article was a Yorkshireman'.<sup>41</sup> Sometimes an attempt to appropriate a celebrity for the county needed a touch of sophistry. The scientist Michael Faraday was widely assumed to have been Yorkshire-born, but in 'Local Notes and Queries', Frederick Ross was forced to deny this to *Leeds Mercury* readers. Faraday had, in fact, been born in London. His father, however, had been born in Settle. 'Thus,' reasoned Ross, 'although Michael Faraday was not born in Yorkshire, he may justly be termed "a Yorkshire Boy"'.<sup>42</sup> The Morley antiquarian William Smith was less generous to a man named Paul, an obscure textile pioneer of the 1730s. After his researches, Smith doubly dismissed this individual with a brusque 'I affirm that Paul was not a Yorkshireman, nor are we indebted to him for any principle in modern spinning machinery'.<sup>43</sup>

Such minute preoccupations with territorial validity could reach levels of nit-picking, but they do help to illustrate one of the methods whereby a regional identity is constructed. The philosophical and anthropological concept of a 'national genius' had been developed in Britain from the seventeenth century as part of the quest for a national identity.<sup>44</sup> The same process could be adapted for sub-national identities. The long lists of luminaries assembled by contributors to the Yorkshire press constituted an argument that the county was a territory especially fruitful in producing eminent divines, inventors, poets, manufacturers, benefactors and, for that matter, villains. When the Hull-born MP Sir Albert Rollit addressed an 1891 gathering in London and proposed a toast to 'Yorkshire, Our County' he made the claim that 'Yorkshire was once a kingdom, and in these days of nation making it might well aspire to be a nation'. He added that:

In every sphere of action Yorkshire could claim its share of eminent people. It could boast of Frobisher and Captain Cook, Wycliffe, the Reformer, Wilberforce, the philanthropist, Marvell, the poet and statesman, the Bronte family, Congreve, the dramatist, and Ebenezer Elliott, whose work was so closely associated with Yorkshire's great movement for reform. In science it could claim such men as Priestley, Michael Faraday, and even Darwin, whose descent had been traced back to a former Mayor of Hull; and, in art, such men as Flaxman, Chantrey and Sir Frederic Leighton.<sup>45</sup>

Such repeated invocation of famous people supports the view of Hewitt and Poole, that regional identities have a particular dependence on 'heroes that are able to offer the region a sense of distinctiveness and mission'.<sup>46</sup> They also argue that the actual territory presents

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41 'Local Notes and Queries', *Leeds Mercury*, 31 May 1879.

42 'Local Notes and Queries', *Leeds Mercury*, 17 May 1879.

43 'Local Notes and Queries', *Leeds Mercury*, 22 February 1879.

44 Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991), pp.75 and 85.

45 Sir A.K. Rollit addressing The Society of Yorkshiremen in London, *The Times*, 23 April 1891. Rollit's claim that 'Yorkshire was once a kingdom' was presumably derived from the fact that a Danish kingdom of York existed in the ninth century, occupying the territory of an earlier kingdom known as Deira, which included much of the territory of the later county – see Hey, *History of Yorkshire*, p.63.

46 M.H. Hewitt and R. Poole. 'Samuel Bamford and northern identity' in N. Kirk. (ed.) *Northern Identities*

particular problems for the creation and sustenance of regional identities ‘because whereas nation states usually have a relatively clearly defined territorial coherence, regional boundaries tend to be fluid and ill-defined’.<sup>47</sup> Yorkshire is at least a partial exception to this rule. The territorial integrity of the historic county was never entirely fixed.<sup>48</sup> But it has had considerably less fluidity than other regions and this made it simpler to seek a ‘Yorkshire genius’ and construct a sense of county identity based on the territorial origins of famous people.

The success of Lord Hawke as the Yorkshire CCC captain resulted in him becoming one of the county’s most famous people of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. As shown above, he felt it necessary to establish his Yorkshire credentials quite forcibly, but although his family had lost its ancestral estate at Towton several generations previously, his father was able to establish a new seat at Wighill Park, near Tadcaster. Hawke inherited a large amount of property and also held a number of directorships, so that he had the private means to devote a large part of his life to the amateur captaincy of a county team that could call on some of the best professionals of the period, and yet tended to underachieve.<sup>49</sup> There is a ruefulness in a *Yorkshire Post* report in the summer of 1885, but also an acknowledgment of the potential role that cricket could play in fostering pride throughout the county:

The news of the brilliant victory gained by the Yorkshire Eleven over Notts has given *universal gratification to Yorkshiremen everywhere* [my italics]... extremely gratifying it is to find that the county of York can still hold her own on the cricket field against all comers.<sup>50</sup>

There would be several seasons of humiliation – with 1889’s second-from-bottom finish in the championship deemed to be the low water mark of Yorkshire cricket<sup>51</sup> – but eventually, under Hawke, victories and championships would become commonplace, although the county press was sceptical at first. At the beginning of the 1893 season the *Leeds Mercury* displayed a pessimism that inversely indicated the growing importance of spectator sport as a component of county pride and identity.

Each year the County of Broad Acres starts well and raises the hopes of her supporters to the pitch of believing that she will come out first in cricket as she usually does in football. And each year the last half of the season brings disaster after disaster.<sup>52</sup>

Within less than a month, the *Mercury* began to shift its position:

It is always best, when one is keenly interested in the success of a particular eleven, to assume a calmly judicial attitude rather than to be extravagant in praise; but we are rapidly being forced to the conclusion that in discussing the Yorkshire team we have done them less than justice...<sup>53</sup>

This was, in fact, to be the first season in ten years that Yorkshire won the championship.

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(Aldershot, Ashgate, 2000), p.114.

47 Ibid.

48 See, for example, D. Hey, ‘Yorkshire’s Southern Boundary’, *Northern History*, XXXVII (2000), 31-47.

49 James P. Coldham, ‘Hawke, Martin Bladen, seventh baron Hawke (1860-1938)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition Jan 20100), [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33767, accessed 26 Jan 2011].

50 *Yorkshire Post*, 20 July 1885.

51 The Rev R.S. Holmes, *The History of Yorkshire County Cricket 1833-1903* (London: Constable, 1904), p.62.

52 *Leeds Mercury*, 9 May 1893.

53 *Leeds Mercury*, 5 June 1893.

When this was accomplished, the county press was not overly effusive, by the standards of later sports journalism, perhaps because, as the Rev R.S. Holmes wrote in 1904, ‘no-one was prepared for the wonderful transformation of 1893 in the fortunes of Yorkshire cricket’.<sup>54</sup> But the 1893 victory laid the foundation for what became the near synonymy of Yorkshire with cricket and therefore a key component of its identity. It is a synonymy that would become ‘almost too familiar a part of our contemporary comic grammar’, according to Russell.<sup>55</sup> A repertoire of anecdotes and sayings is used to illustrate this ‘grammar’, the best known being a comment attributed to Yorkshire county player Wilfred Rhodes, who rebuked a light-hearted new recruit by saying that ‘we don’t play cricket for fun, you know’. Yorkshire people ‘enjoyed this sort of joke against themselves’, according to Derek Birley.<sup>56</sup>

During the transformatory period of the 1890s, Lord Hawke’s celebrity rose and he made conscious attempts to foster a strong sense of Yorkshire identity. For example, he claimed responsibility for introducing a county cricket cap with the emblem of a white rose, although he admitted that the idea was copied from Lancashire, with its red rose cap badge.<sup>57</sup> A new tradition had been born, according to David Hey, one that that ‘enabled Yorkshiremen to identify themselves with their county and to adopt the white rose of the medieval House of York’.<sup>58</sup> It was during the period of Hawke’s captaincy that matches with Lancashire began to achieve special significance:

The War of the Roses has become a tradition in our cricket fixtures. We enter into all our games earnestly, but our encounters with Lancashire are invariably the most strenuous of our programme. The matches are invariably played in the friendliest spirit, but with a desperate keenness surpassing that of all others I have participated in.<sup>59</sup>

To this day, the ‘Roses Match’ – as it came to be known – is regarded as one of the keenest of sporting rivalries and is popularly supposed to be emblematic of, or perhaps a surrogate for deep seated antagonism between Lancashire and Yorkshire. By the 1880s the latter county’s press was habitually referring to Lancashire as the ‘old enemy’ in the context of sporting fixtures.<sup>60</sup>

Following Linda Colley’s analysis of ‘Britishness and otherness’,<sup>61</sup> Hewitt and Poole are among the historians who have expressed the belief that within an English regional context an identity is most effectively shaped when it can be constructed in direct and explicit opposition to an ‘other’.<sup>62</sup> Stuart Rawnsley has argued that the North of England as a whole was constructed as ‘other’ to ‘the emerging sense of Englishness constructed around the capital and the South of England’.<sup>63</sup> Intra-regionally, if Lancashire was indeed

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<sup>54</sup> Holmes, *History of Yorkshire County Cricket*, p.67.

<sup>55</sup> Russell, ‘Sport and Identity’, 207

<sup>56</sup> Birley, *Social History of English Cricket*, p.201.

<sup>57</sup> Hawke, *Recollections*, p.71.

<sup>58</sup> Hey, *History of Yorkshire*, p.425.

<sup>59</sup> Lord Hawke, *Recollections*, p.68.

<sup>60</sup> For example, a resume of the county football season in the *Yorkshire Post*, 16 February 1885.

<sup>61</sup> Linda Colley, ‘Britishness and Otherness: An Argument’, *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Oct., 1992), 309-329.

<sup>62</sup> Hewitt and Poole, ‘Samuel Bamford and northern identity,’ 118.

<sup>63</sup> Rawnsley, ‘Constructing “The North”’, p.10.

Yorkshire's 'other', then this opposition, on the sports field or elsewhere, would be an important element of the identity of both counties. There was a tendency among Yorkshire novelists, at the very period when spectator sport was growing in popularity, to construct an ahistorical rivalry in which the Wars of the Roses were recast in the popular imagination as a conflict between Lancashire and Yorkshire rather than between the Houses of York and Lancaster. Edward Royle describes this as a 'false identification with the dynastic struggles of the later middle ages'.<sup>64</sup> For example, in his novel *Lasses Love*, set in the mid-nineteenth century, Halliwell Sutcliffe (1870-1932), has some of his characters take part in a ritual brawl on the Lancashire-Yorkshire border. They are said to be fuelled by folk memories of the Battle of Towton and there are recollections of 'the long unhappy battle between the White Rose and the Red – the blood spilled ruthlessly'. However, the two sides join each other for a drink after the fight. 'They're gradely folk, after all, the men of Lancashire... they're staunch to fight, and staunch for friendship afterwards,' remarks one of the characters.<sup>65</sup> Not even in the febrile imagination of writers such as Halliwell Sutcliffe, then, is it easy to find evidence of real antagonism between the neighbouring counties.

Shortly after the passage of his quoted above, Lord Hawke referred to the 'jolly rivalry' between Lancashire and Yorkshire and this phrase is a fair reflection of contemporary attitudes. It finds an echo in an analysis by Russell, writing about sub-regional conflicts in the North of England:

The best-known rivalry is that between Yorkshire and Lancashire... this opposition, however has arguably been far less significant than is sometimes assumed. Even the genuinely intense sporting battles between the two have disguised a considerable degree of mutual recognition and respect and a body of shared values.<sup>66</sup>

Indeed, the phrase 'sister county' is quite often encountered, in a variety of contexts, such as a letter in the *Yorkshire Post* from a reader in Lancashire inviting Yorkshire readers to share their 'sister county's' lamentation on the fall of Khartoum (an example of the compatibility and intermingling of regional and imperial identities).<sup>67</sup> There was a more acerbic, perhaps ironic use of the phrase in 1896, when the *Post* lamented the league system that had been 'grafted upon Yorkshire club cricket'. It was an alien importation from Lancashire.

...across the border it seems as if the artificial form of the sport flourishes more naturally than the true game itself... in the sister county, league sport appears to develop more naturally than it does in Yorkshire. Why that should be we can scarcely explain: indeed the attempt should not be made without running the risk of making invidious comparisons.<sup>68</sup>

'Sister county' was regularly, more warmly and more predictably used by the *Yorkshire Factory Times*, which not only shared a publishing history with Lancashire's *Cotton Factory Times* but also had a sense of shared political and social purpose between the workers of the two textile districts.<sup>69</sup> There was, however, a repeated acknowledgment that

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<sup>64</sup> Royle, 'Regions and identities', p.7.

<sup>65</sup> Halliwell Sutcliffe, *Lasses Love* (London, Ward Lock, 1919), p.20.

<sup>66</sup> Russell, *Looking North*, pp.19-20.

<sup>67</sup> *Yorkshire Post*, 9 February 1885.

<sup>68</sup> *Yorkshire Post*, 3 August 1896.

<sup>69</sup> The *Cotton Factory Times* was founded in 1885 by John Andrew, of Ashton-under-Lyne. Its success encouraged Andrew to launch *The Yorkshire Factory Times* in 1889, although the latter paper was sold in 1907. See Eddie Cass, Alan Fowler and Terry Wyke, 'The remarkable rise and long decline of the *Cotton Factory*



Lancashire was more advanced in trade union matters – ‘Organisation has brought higher wages and a better and more healthy condition of things to the sister county’.<sup>70</sup>

Expressions of this county ‘sisterhood’ could also be found in corners of the Empire. Whereas single county societies were the norm among emigrants, a Lancashire and Yorkshire Society was formed in Otago, New Zealand, in 1903, and 1891 had seen the formation of the Natal Yorkshire and Lancashire Association. The chairman’s speech at its 1894 dinner – reported in detail by the *Leeds Mercury* – was delivered by a Lancastrian, J.B. Cottam:

The Chairman, in proposing the toast of the evening, ‘Yorkshire and Lancashire’, referred to the historical connection between the two counties. The warfare of their fathers had given place to that rivalry in commerce, arts, science, mechanics which had made the two counties so enormously great. Yes and sports too. This was testified by the enormous crowds which assembled to witness the various cricket or football matches held in those counties... long may that rivalry continue and the opponents maintain the same spirit of cordiality that had been maintained in the past.<sup>71</sup>

Subsequent speeches at the dinner – including an address by William Hartley, émigré brother of the Yorkshire dialect poet John – drew distinctions between Yorkshire and Lancashire and claimed superiority for the respective counties in various fields, but the tone was one of good-natured banter. This is usually the tone in published material that plays Lancashire against Yorkshire. An example from a Manchester newspaper in 1895 provides a useful late-Victorian summary of the supposed characteristics of ‘the usual type of stolid, hard-headed Yorkshireman’.

A Yorkshire visitor to a school in Lancashire has asked a classroom, ‘What are the characteristics of a Yorkshireman?’ ...

With surprise he noticed a dozen hands instantly raised and heard a dozen voices eagerly exclaim, ‘Please, sir, I know’.  
In pleasurable anticipation, he began at the bottom of the class.  
‘Well, my boy, what is your opinion of a Yorkshireman?’  
‘A shrewd man, sir.’  
‘Very good.’  
‘A man who eats Yorkshire pudding before his meat.’  
He smiled feebly.  
‘A man with a big head, with red hair on it.’  
He commenced to frown, and felt very uneasy.  
‘A man with a bigger opinion of himself than that of the rest of England put together.’  
The visitor collapsed.  
‘One who is not content to live on the crops, but who bites the earth.’  
When they had all finished, a little, half-daft lad, who had before hung timidly back, now raised his hand.  
‘Well, boy, what is your opinion?’ impatiently inquired the Yorkshireman, for he had almost lost his temper.  
‘Please, sir, a man who was born in Yorkshire,’ faintly replied the diminutive one.  
‘Well, well, my boy, yours is certainly the best answer of a vulgar lot, and here is a present for you.’  
So saying, he thrust a coin into the lad’s hand, and hurriedly took his departure.  
‘What’s he give thee, Daffie?’ a dozen voices whispered eagerly when the door closed behind the visitor.  
‘O’ny a penny!’ was the daft one’s sad rejoinder.  
And then the youngsters indulged in a roar of hearty laughter, which could almost have been heard

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*Times*, *Media History*, 4: 2 (1998), 141- 159.

70 *Yorkshire Factory Times*, 1 September 1893. For an examination of the differences between labour organisation and working practices in Lancashire and Yorkshire, see Tony Jowitt, ‘The Retardation of Trade Unionism in the Yorkshire Worsted Textile Industry’, in J.A. Jowitt and A.J. McIvor (eds) *Employers and Labour in the English Textile Industries 1850-1939* (London: Routledge, 1988).

71 *Leeds Mercury*, 22 September 1894.

by the visitor had he then been sitting by his own fireside in the shire of the broad acres.

‘I thought he was a Yorkshireman!’ they chorused together, and then they laughed again, till tears of merriment rolled down their tiny cheeks. ‘Yer can tell a Yorkshireman anywhere,’ remarked one of the youngsters, with a knowing shake of the head.<sup>72</sup>

This passage includes some of the negative auto-stereotypes – such as tightness with money, county self-regard and the practice of using inexpensive pudding as an appetite suppressant – that Yorkshire people tended to celebrate in, for example, dialect postcards and Richard Blakeborough’s collection of sayings. But here they are turned back on the county. There is a hint of antagonism in the anecdote, but it remains consistent with Lord Hawke’s ‘jolly rivalry’, a term that covers most published expressions that we find of Lancashire-Yorkshire relations in the nineteenth century, outside the pages of historical novels. When he addressed an audience in Burnley in 1851, the Earl of Carlisle – formerly Lord Morpeth, who been a reformist MP for Yorkshire and the West Riding – used ingratiating rhetoric which referred to the supposed historic rivalry between the two counties but made plain their shared characteristics and industrial destinies:

Across the hills which rise above your town I have had many opportunities of addressing audiences upon many similar occasions, in some of those valleys which, like your own, are distinguished alike by the beauties of their natural scenery and by the busy hum of human industry; and I feel that in coming before a Lancashire audience we are no longer living in the times when the names of York and Lancaster signalled different factions and different parties; but now, on the contrary, in our happier era, either your red rose has faded, or our white rose has blushed into one common colour and instead of contending for trivial causes, or for opposing dynasties we may now only try to demonstrate which has the greatest number, which has the best supported, which has the best conducted mechanics’ institutions.<sup>73</sup>

Theories of populism, post-modernism and the process that has been described as the ‘declassing’ of English history<sup>74</sup> can be adapted to argue that localism and regionalism played a role in the formation of identities that transcended class considerations. Here again the figure of Lord Hawke provides a case study. He was an aristocrat who was able to lead a life devoted to his chosen sports, which included long seasons spent tiger shooting in India. Yet he became a figure of trans-class, populist appeal in Yorkshire and a conduit for Yorkshireness. There were many manifestations of his celebrity. For example, Hawke was frequently enlisted to lend his name, image and sometimes a facsimile of his signature to popular publishing ventures. When the Leeds magazine *Yorkshire Owl* issued its ‘Grand Cricket Annual’ in 1896, the supplement was described as being ‘under the patronage of Lord Hawke’ [Figure 2]. In November 1896 the Scarborough publishing firm E.T.W. Dennis, later to issue a long series of Yorkshire dialect postcards, produced a photographic Christmas card depicting Hawke and his team. ‘At a time when Yorkshiremen are vieing with each other in honouring the team which won the county championship, such a souvenir should be immensely popular,’ opined one commentator.<sup>75</sup>

On July 29, 1899, a penny magazine named *Yorkshire Chat*, described as ‘A Weekly

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<sup>72</sup> *Manchester Times*, 20 December 1895.

<sup>73</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 27 November 1851

<sup>74</sup> A term employed by A. Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism in Imperial London, 1868-1906* (London: Royal Historical Society, 2007), p.206. For a concise analysis of the process see R. McWilliam, *Popular politics in nineteenth-century England* (London: Routledge, 1998). Key texts in the development of populism include Joyce, *Visions of the People*.

<sup>75</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 24 November 1896.

journal for Yorkshiremen', made its first appearance and the principal selling point was 'Our Novel Cricket Competition', in which readers voted for a Yorkshire XI, with the chance of a £25 prize for the reader whose list coincided most closely with the consensus. Prominently displayed was a facsimile of a handwritten letter headed 'What Lord Hawke thinks of our competition'.

Dear Sir, I suppose it is inevitable that differences of opinion shall arise at times as to the elevens that are chosen. All that I have ever tried to do is the best for Yorkshire. And I am grateful to any Brother Yorkshiremen for their loyalty. In your cricket competition I shall take great interest and hope that every cricket lover will play up and add to the score. Good luck to Yorkshire Chat.

Yours truly,  
Hawke<sup>76</sup>

Later in the issue, the magazine's 'Yorkshire Portrait Gallery No 1' was, somewhat inevitably, a photograph of Lord Hawke. No suggestion of 'shamateurism' was ever attached to his name, so it must be assumed that Hawke participated in these populist ventures as part of his remit to cultivate loyalty to the county and its cricket club. And in late 1896, Hawke received tangible evidence that 'Brother Yorkshiremen' throughout the county, spatially and socially, held him in considerable esteem and affection.

Shortly after Yorkshire was confirmed as the champion county of 1896, Sir Charles Legard (1846-1901), a baronet whose estate was at Ganton, near Scarborough, circulated a letter, eliding pride in sporting prowess with pride in county, that was widely reproduced or reported in the Yorkshire press.

... every Yorkshireman must be delighted with the victory of his county. It seems to me that every lover of cricket and everyone who is proud of his county must feel that a deep debt of gratitude is due to Lord Hawke, who has for several years proved himself one of the ablest, one of the best, one of the most popular captains of a county eleven.<sup>77</sup>

Legard went on to suggest that funds should be raised for a testimonial to the man 'who has won honour for his county'. The scheme can be interpreted as one old Etonian member of the Yorkshire gentry soliciting cash and kudos for another. Legard had been almost the archetype of a sporting aristocrat, heavily involved in hunting, horse racing and shooting. He had won county honours himself in 1873 when he represented Yorkshire against Warwickshire at pigeon shooting – Yorkshire won by a margin of three birds. In 1874 he became Conservative MP for Scarborough but stood down five years later, shortly before he was declared bankrupt, with his Yorkshire estates mortgaged to the hilt. This did not end his Conservative activism nor his political career, for he was elected to the



Figure 2: Leeds weekly magazine the *Yorkshire Owl* affirms the popularity of Yorkshire cricket and Lord Hawke in 1896.

<sup>76</sup> *Yorkshire Chat*, 29 July 1899.

<sup>77</sup> *North-Eastern Daily Gazette* (Middlesbrough), 31 August 1896.

new East Riding County Council in 1889 and was its long-serving chairman.<sup>78</sup> Legard, although more politicised, was therefore from the same social background as Lord Hawke. But his suggestion that the aristocratic Yorkshire cricket captain should be honoured with a testimonial was taken up with enthusiasm throughout the county and the fund's progress was reported almost on a daily basis by many of its newspapers, Liberal and Tory.

This was at the close of a cricket season in which the wages paid to professional players had been a subject of controversy. A *Leeds Mercury* contributor who signed himself as 'Tyke' grappled with this issue:

I am heartily glad to see that so promptly after our Yorkshire cricket team has won the coveted place of honour a prominent and well-known Yorkshireman has suggested a testimonial to Lord Hawke [who] has acted his part well and deserves the thanks of every true Yorkshireman. But while I am delighted at the suggestion which Sir Charles Legard, Bart, has made, and which you support, yet I think that every member of the team who has taken a part in gaining the premier position in county cricket is deserving of some recognition. Personally, I think from recent unpleasant revelations, that our professional cricketers are not paid as well as they should be...but surely the Yorkshire team has, throughout the season, worked with a far higher aim than mere money, and has succeeded splendidly in bringing honour to our county. I would therefore suggest that in addition to the testimonial to Lord Hawke, funds shall be raised to give a complimentary dinner to the members of the team at Leeds Town Hall or at York...<sup>79</sup>

That was seemingly the only faintly contrary note in the Yorkshire press. A sequence of letters in the *Yorkshire Post* contained some argument, but this was over the best way to enable the county's working classes to subscribe to the testimonial. A writer signed 'Cover Point' had gained the erroneous impression that the sum of £1 was the minimum subscription:

I feel such a sum would entirely preclude working men subscribing, however desirous they might be to do so. In fact, several of my shop colleagues reiterated the same sentiments. My object in writing is to learn if the subscription can be placed on such a footing that working men can contribute. Lord Hawke is a sterling Yorkshire sportsman, a grand example of a true Yorkshire gentleman...<sup>80</sup>

Cover Point's mistake about the subscription level was pointed out – there was no minimum sum – and Frederick Milner of Whitby contributed a letter that amplified the theme:

I would suggest that all those Yorkshiremen who wish to honour Lord Hawke should send what they think fit and let it be clearly understood that the shillings and sixpences of the working classes will be as cordially received as the larger sums contributed by those in better circumstances. I am sure it will greatly add to Lord Hawke's gratification if it be known that numbers of his working men friends have been able to join in showing their appreciation of his great services to Yorkshire cricket.<sup>81</sup>

For almost four months, many of the county's newspapers published regular lists of the latest donors, the amounts that they gave to the fund and their towns or districts of residence. It is thus possible to gauge the populist appeal of Lord Hawke to his 'brother Yorkshiremen' (names of donors were generally published with initials rather than first names, but there is no evidence that women subscribed to the fund in any significant number).

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<sup>78</sup> Legard's career is reconstructed here from reports in Yorkshire newspapers and from *The Times*, although his obituary in the latter on 9 December 1901 did not mention his bankruptcy proceedings.

<sup>79</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 2 September 1896.

<sup>80</sup> *Yorkshire Post*, 5 September 1896.

<sup>81</sup> *Yorkshire Post*, 8 September 1896.



By the time the fund closed at the end of December, 1896, it had raised the sum of £845.16s.6d. There had been approximately 440 subscribers, a figure that includes a large number of joint donations from members of cricket clubs and employees of firms.<sup>82</sup> One guinea was quickly established as the most common level of donation, hence Cover Point's misapprehension. The preponderance of this sum means that the majority of donors were from the middle and upper classes. Lord Wenlock, Sir Reginald and Lady Graham of Ripon, Lord Dunmore, the Earl of Feversham, Earl Wharnccliffe, the Earl of Dartmouth and the Duke of Devonshire were among the titled contributors. The testimonial's progenitor, Sir Charles Legard, and his wife, contributed £5 each. But, as correspondents to the *Yorkshire Post* anticipated, there was a considerable quantity of smaller donations or group donations and it is possible to deduce the socially heterogeneous nature of the contributors. Foxholes Colliery Cricket Club and the committee of the Heavy Woollen District Cricket Challenge Cup represent the working-class cricket culture that Rob Light sees as the basis of the game in Yorkshire. A donation of nine shillings from 'Wilson's Book-keepers' in Hull is one of several examples of workmates chipping in. T. Bell, the 'Ganton Signalman', contributed two shillings – although this might have some connection to the fact that Sir Charles Legard's estate was at Ganton.

On 3 October 1896, it was reported that J.F. Riley of Halifax had forwarded 39 donations from people in that town. A number of these contributors can be matched with fair confidence to census information and among them are William Foster, a brass founder (10s); Michael Booth, a butcher (5s); James Parkin, a riveter (5s); Albert Eastwood, a worsted spinner (5s); Henry Petty, a dyer's labourer (2s 6d); John Ashworth, a machine turner (2s 6d); John Kippax and Herbert Townsend, bank workers (2s 6d each); Robert Needham, a draper (2s 6d); and Samuel Appleyard, a pub landlord (2s 6d). For some of these men, even a donation of half a crown would have represented a considerably larger portion of their income than the sums of £1 and above given to the testimonial by the professional and upper classes.<sup>83</sup> It can be shown therefore that a wide cross section of Yorkshire society was willing to contribute to a fund designed to reward an aristocratic, amateur cricketer who, while not fabulously wealthy, was comfortably provided for.<sup>84</sup>

The regular press bulletins on the progress of the fund also demonstrate that most parts of the county responded to the appeal. Leeds and Sheffield, not only among the largest urban centres in the county but also competitors to be regarded as the home of Yorkshire cricket, provided the most substantial number of donors. But textile and mixed industry centres such as Bradford, Halifax, Batley, Keighley, Dewsbury, Goole and Wakefield, plus coal mining towns such as Barnsley and Pontefract, were well represented, alongside

82 Data for this analysis of the Lord Hawke Testimonial Fund is taken from reports between October–December 1896 in *Leeds Mercury*, *Yorkshire Post*, *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, *York Herald* and *North-Eastern Daily Gazette*.

83 The median wage in 1896 would probably not have risen much above the £2 that was given for 1886 by Bowley. He estimated that the lowest decile earned 16s 7d and the lower quartile 20s. Even for those whose earnings placed them in the upper quartile, weekly earnings of just under 30s would have meant that a donation of a guinea or a pound to the Hawke testimonial would have constituted some two thirds of their wage – see Arthur Lyon Bowley, *Wages and income in the United Kingdom since 1860* (1937), quoted by Jeffrey G. Williamson in 'Earnings Inequality in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Sep., 1980), 457–475.

84 Hawke's wealth at death in 1938 was £59,043. – Coldham, 'Hawke, Martin Bladen', *Oxford DNB*.

more genteel West Riding towns such as Harrogate and Ripon. Donations came from York and most of the principal towns of the North Riding and its coast – such as Helmsley, Richmond, Pickering, Malton and, in particular, Scarborough, which had been home to a popular cricket festival since 1871. The East Riding was less well represented but there were a number of donations from Hull and Beverley in addition to smaller settlements such as Burton Agnes.

The only large urban centre in Yorkshire seemingly conspicuous by its absence in the list of donors to the Lord Hawke Testimonial was Middlesbrough, although its local newspaper did publicise the fund. This lends support to a view that this nineteenth-century boom town, which by the 1890s had grown to a population of more than 75,000, having been a cluster of four houses at the start of the century, looked northwards across the Tees for its economic and cultural ties. Although the ‘arbitrary dictates of administrative and river boundaries’ meant that Middlesbrough was a part of the North Riding of Yorkshire, the town dubbed ‘Ironopolis’ should be regarded as part of the North-East region, in the view of D.J. Rowe.<sup>85</sup> Its newspaper, indeed, was named the *North-Eastern Daily Gazette*. Yorkshire County Cricket Club played matches in Middlesbrough – including a game against the Australians in 1882 – and the peripatetic Yorkshire Show, which has also been credited with a role in securing a pan-Yorkshire identity,<sup>86</sup> came to Middlesbrough in 1892, after a long lobbying campaign by the council that had begun in 1877. The town, however, was probably fallow territory for a sense of Yorkshiredness, not least because of the make-up of its rapidly expanding population. Whereas most migration to industrial centres was short-distance and intra-regional,<sup>87</sup> Middlesbrough’s immigrants came from far afield. The 1871 census revealed that nearly half its population were born outside Yorkshire, including 3,622 from Ireland, 1,531 from Wales, 1,368 from Scotland, 1,169 from the West Midlands and about 600 who were born overseas.<sup>88</sup>

Some Middlesbrough institutions proclaimed a Yorkshire allegiance. When the town’s new hospital opened in 1864 it was named the North Riding Infirmary, as a reflection, states Minoru Yasumoto, of ‘the proud local view that Middlesbrough was the most populous centre of the North Riding of Yorkshire’.<sup>89</sup> It seems to have been more common, however for local institutions to adopt the identity of Cleveland – for example the Cleveland Club was the meeting place for the local elite.<sup>90</sup> The dialect and folklore

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85 D.J.Rowe, ‘The North East’, in F. M. L. Thompson (ed), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950* (Cambridge, 1990), p.416. For discussions of the significance of the River Tees as a regional boundary see D. Newton, *North-East England, 1569-1625: Governance, Culture and Identity* (Woodbridge: 2006), p.13 and Pythian-Adams, ‘Frontier Valleys’, 237-240. An area defined as ‘the far north-eastern corner of Yorkshire’ was included in the remit of the AHRC-funded Research Centre for North-East England History formed by historians from the universities of Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teeside from 2000 to 2005 – see Adrian Green and A.J. Pollard, ‘Identifying Regions’ in Adrian Green and A.J. Pollard (eds), *Regional Identities in North East England, 1300-2000* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007).

86 See Russell, ‘Culture and the formation of northern English identities’, 277.

87 Langton, ‘Industrial Revolution and the Regional Geography of England’, 159.

88 Hey, *History of Yorkshire*, p. 402. For an account of the growth of Middlesbrough, see Asa Briggs, ‘Middlesbrough: the Growth of a New Community’ in his *Victorian Cities* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), a chapter that is also published in A.J. Pollard (ed.), *Middlesbrough: Town and Community 1830-1950* (Stroud: Sutton, 1996).

89 Minoru Yasumoto, *The Rise of a Victorian Ironopolis* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), p.180.

90 Tosh Warwick, ‘The Social and Cultural Pursuits of the Industrial Elite: Middlesborough, c. 1880-

of Cleveland was energetically propagated by writer and publisher George Markham Tweddell (1823-1903) and his wife Elizabeth (1824-1899), who used the pseudonym Florence Cleveland for books of poetry and short stories.<sup>91</sup> Tweddell was a sometime resident of Middlesbrough, but spent most of his life in Stokesley, from where he published many books and a series of poetry and prose collections entitled *North of England Tractates*. The Middlesbrough *Evening Gazette* enthused about these: ‘Through all there is a general enthusiastic love of Cleveland, its hills and dales... they supply a want in the literature of North Yorkshire’.<sup>92</sup> But although they wrote in and about dialect, and achieved modest celebrity, the Tweddells remained essentially literary, rural figures and it seems unlikely that their works penetrated the urban culture and identity of Middlesbrough in the same way that dialect poets and almanac writers such as John Hartley and Charles Rogers managed in the West Riding. The Cleveland and North Yorkshire dialect tradition would have little meaning dialectally or culturally to a large proportion of Middlesbrough’s new population. Meanwhile, it would appear that the cricket followers of ‘Ironopolis’ were reluctant to contribute to the testimonial of their ‘brother Yorkshireman’ Lord Hawke.

Having closed at the end of 1896, the fund was sufficiently large to pay for a portrait of Hawke and a large quantity of silver plate. The latter was presented to him on 27 July 1897, during the Yorkshire v. Somerset match at the Headingley ground in Leeds. The event earned a self-satisfied paragraph in Hawke’s autobiography.

Six thousand spectators gathered on the football ground at Headingley, when dear old [president and treasurer of Yorkshire CCC] Ellison made the formal presentation to me in the presence of most of my family and the Committee and all the ‘pros’... Sir Charles Legard added a few eloquent words, saying the plate should have been gold instead of silver but had been given by all, rich and poor, old and young.<sup>93</sup>

Lord Hawke’s contribution to the cricket history of Yorkshire and England was considerable and often controversial. His social status and his role can be passed through a theoretical filter, in particular that of John Hargreaves, who writes about the part which, he argues, was played by sport, especially cricket, in ‘the hegemonic project’ that entrenched the political and economic power of the bourgeoisie in late nineteenth-century Britain. As a paternalistic Tory aristocrat, Hawke was hardly a bourgeois figure, but was perhaps an example of the late Victorian and Edwardian gentleman-amateur sportsman who exerted his greatest ideological and cultural influence at the precise time, according to Hargreaves, ‘that bourgeois hegemony over the working class is successfully achieved’.<sup>94</sup> But while such speculation is possible, and while allowances must be made for levels of deference in the late-nineteenth century, the purpose here has been to analyse an episode of Hawke’s

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1934’, paper read at the Conference on Modern British History, University of Dundee, 16 June, 2011.

Other Middlesbrough organisations which selected this sub-regional identity included Cleveland Scientific Institution, Cleveland Literary and Philosophical Society, Cleveland Ironmasters’ Association, Cleveland Mine Owners’ Association.

91 Occasionally she appears as Florence Tweddell, for example when anthologised in F.W. Moorman’s *Yorkshire Dialect Poems* (1916). Her significance as a rare, if not unique example of a female Yorkshire dialect writer in the nineteenth century is noted by Russell, *Looking North*, p.122.

92 *Evening Gazette*, Middlesbrough, 23 July 1870.

93 Hawke, *Recollections*, p.147.

94 John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), p.207. See also Norman Baker, ‘Whose Hegemony? The Origins of the Amateur Ethos in Nineteenth Century English Society’, *Sport in History*, 24:1 (2004), 1-16.

life in order to demonstrate that a populist sense of Yorkshire identity which transcended class and localism was established by the 1890s. Subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis, the Lord Hawke Testimonial helps to confirm that enthusiasm for county cricket was a significant component in the development of a Yorkshire identity and it indicates that this identity was felt throughout the social spectrum – from titled, rural gentry remitting their sums of a guinea or higher, to town dwelling riveters and labourers contributing their shillings to buy silver plate for a wealthy aristocrat who was seen as something of an embodiment of Yorkshiriness.

The populist appeal of Hawke was undermined on occasions. In 1897 he dismissed the veteran professional Bobby Peel, who frequently arrived at matches drunk. Hawke was taken aback by the backlash to this. James P. Coldham writes that ‘it was as if he had not realised that Bobby Peel was a living legend in the shire of the broad acres, a working-class hero whose deeds had long since become an integral part of the mythology of Yorkshire cricket’.<sup>95</sup> But despite such episodes, Hawke was a figure whose appeal in the 1890s transcended class and place and he was also able to unite the older, rural, upper class conception of Yorkshiriness with a more progressive and urban identity. The episode of the testimonial fund, indeed the popularisation of county cricket in general, can also be used to demonstrate the role played by the press in constructing and mediating a sense of Yorkshire identity. Newspapers in many of the county’s main urban centres gave the fund their seal of approval and, with regular reports, ensured that it maintained momentum. From this specific, quantifiable example of the Yorkshire press helping to foster a pan-county identity, I will now collate examples of the various ways in which that press projected aspects of supposed Yorkshire character. The process may well have been a symbiotic one, in that it constructed as well as reflected aspects of Yorkshiriness.

### 3. ‘A sterling, industrious race’

BETWEEN February and March 1877 the Bradford periodical *The Yorkshireman* included a six-part serial entitled ‘A Cockney’s Impressions of Yorkshire’. Internal evidence suggests that this series was, in fact, written by the editor of *The Yorkshireman*, James Burnley, the Bradford-born journalist, novelist, poet and playwright, who took on the persona of a visiting ‘Cockney’ in order to shine a satirical light on his county and its characteristics. The third instalment included the following passage:

One thing which strikes me very forcibly is in connection with their egotism. They have the largest and in many respects the finest county in England; the men, particularly in the North and East Ridings are fine and stalwart... But in their conversation, in their press, the one theme is harped on – the superiority of Yorkshiremen to all the peoples of the earth. There is really no need for this, and it seems a pity that so hard-headed and practical a race should find it necessary to constantly play on one string for fear the rest of the world should forget their excellence and virtues.<sup>96</sup>

Was it true that the county’s press continually harped on the superior character of Yorkshire people? James Burnley was plainly engaged in satirical hyperbole and, as argued at the

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<sup>95</sup> Coldham, *Lord Hawke*, p.131.

<sup>96</sup> *The Yorkshireman*, 30 March 1877.



start of this chapter, the nineteenth-century provincial press in Yorkshire, and England generally, was not particularly inward-looking and indeed served as a national press. But although the county newspapers were not so preoccupied with Yorkshireness as Burnley implied, they did include frequent assumptions and assertions – often boastful – about Yorkshire characteristics. Keywords which emerge include ‘tenacity’, ‘energy’, ‘individuality’, ‘determination’, ‘heartiness’, ‘hospitality’, ‘plain speaking’, ‘bluffness’ and ‘sturdy’. Such terms have already been encountered in previous chapters of this thesis – for example the dissections of Yorkshireness concocted by J.S. Fletcher and Richard Blakeborough – and none of them, with the possible exception of the hospitality motif, contrasts greatly with stereotypes and auto-stereotypes of Yorkshire people that are current today. But it can be shown the Victorian press played a key role in constructing and disseminating these images.

The morally nihilistic elements of Yorkshireness become less evident. The older Yorkshire identity, the ‘Tyke’ as a cunning, duplicitous individual who put the ‘Yorkshire Bite’ on unwary outsiders, retained some currency, as I have shown. But it was increasingly a historical curio. Industrialisation had enabled the emergence of new identities based on enterprise, shrewdness and hard work. New or evolved tropes of Yorkshireness were no longer restricted to horse dealers or rural innocents but could be applied to a mill owner, a politician or a church minister who was deemed too bluff or plain-spoken. This means that they had the potential to be trans-class identities. It might be the case, as Paul Ward argues, that regional identities tend to be working-class specific, applied to the people who speak the dialect or engage in local custom.<sup>97</sup> But the Yorkshireness which evolved in the nineteenth century defies that rule to some extent. These points can be made by contextual examples.

Tenacity and doggedness and an eclectic propensity for sport were claimed as Yorkshire characteristics:

In early life [a Yorkshireman] develops a tendency to ride horses, shoot sparrows, play dominoes and hunt rats. In later life these tendencies are matured until we have a bold, honest Yorkshireman – a sportsman who holds his own in front of the wickets, who can wield a tennis racket, who can ‘drop’ a football, or handle a lacrosse stick with the best.<sup>98</sup>

When Yorkshire batsmen were at the crease they would display ‘a thorough Yorkshire tenacity’.<sup>99</sup> Such characteristics might have been part of a wider imperial British identity, but they were often deemed to be enhanced in Yorkshire people.

The fact that when such events as the Ebor handicap and the St Leger [horse races in York and Doncaster respectively] are likely to be closely contested, there is sure to be gathered an extra large concourse proves that the Yorkshire character truly reflects human nature in one of its most marked features. Trials of strength and endurance, where the issue is uncertain, always have had and always will have, charm for the Englishman and especially for the Yorkshireman.<sup>100</sup>

As a ‘sterling, industrious race’,<sup>101</sup> Yorkshire people were often deemed to be ideal empire builders. The census of 1851 showed that ‘the tide of emigration... has carried away a part

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97 Paul Ward, *Britishness Since 1870* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.68.

98 *Yorkshire Post*, 27 April 1885.

99 *Yorkshire Post*, 4 May 1885.

100 *York Herald*, 17 September 1887.

101 *Leeds Mercury*, 20 January 1890.

of our populace to lands where the energy and skill of their Yorkshire character will be fully developed'.<sup>102</sup> Sir Albert Rollit asserted that

throughout the length and breadth of the world... Yorkshiremen might be found pursuing the same path of industry, and displaying the same qualities which had helped to make their country great. It had truly been said that Yorkshiremen, Scotchmen and Chinamen were the great race forces of the world.<sup>103</sup>

Even the Lancastrian J.B. Cottam, at the 1894 dinner of the Natal Yorkshire and Lancashire Association, stated that, excepting the Scots, Yorkshiremen were 'the best colonisers of her Majesty's dominions... Go where they would, wherever there was a settlement or town... a Yorkshireman was bound to be there'. The guest speaker William Hartley summed up 'those characteristics of a Yorkshireman which had made him a man of the world, go where he would, as a straightforward, outspoken, determined man'.

...and wherever they had found him they had found the same stubbornness of character, the same determination to do the right, to pity the distress, and help on the needy in whatever country they found it. He was man unique in that particular...<sup>104</sup>

Independence and frankness were customarily regarded as hallmarks of Yorkshireness. At a banquet in Huddersfield in 1859, the town's recently unseated MP, Halifax industrialist Edward Akroyd, paid tribute to the chairman, a politician and magistrate, T.P. Crosland:

I have no need to tell you of his merits. You know his genuine straightforward Yorkshire character – his outspoken honesty. He fears no man and courts no man's favour. That is the class of man to endear himself to the hearts of Yorkshiremen.<sup>105</sup>

During an election address in 1868, Bradford MP W. E. Forster told constituents that 'if they wished to keep up the Yorkshire character for independence and plain speaking, they would let Mr Gladstone know, without any doubt whatever, what their opinion was'.<sup>106</sup>

These were qualities that outsiders could find disconcerting. Clergymen, likely to be seconded to Yorkshire from other parts of the country, often attested to this. At a church conference in Hull in 1869, the Rev Canon Jarrett was reported as saying that

The peculiar feature of the Yorkshire character was independence, and that operated most injuriously in hindering ministerial works in rural districts... Persons who had been born and brought up in the North could scarcely perhaps appreciate the extent of this hindrance, as could those who come from the South.<sup>107</sup>

A clergyman from the South who came to Leeds as Vicar of Meanwood reminisced that 'he came upon them, thirty one years ago as a stranger. He did not at that time know much of the Yorkshire character, but he soon discovered its steadfast and loving tenderness under the outside coarseness'.<sup>108</sup> When the Vicar of Leeds, Canon Jayne, was about to depart in order to become Bishop of Chester in 1889, he was asked, 'in common with most strangers who have sojourned in any one of the three ridings', for his opinion on the people of Yorkshire.

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<sup>102</sup> *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 26 April 1851

<sup>103</sup> *The Times*, 23 April 1891.

<sup>104</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 22 September 1894.

<sup>105</sup> *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 11 June 1859.

<sup>106</sup> *Bradford Observer*, 29 October 1868.

<sup>107</sup> *Morning Post*, 23 October 1869.

<sup>108</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 7 August 1882. In the next day's edition the newspaper carried an apology, for having incorrectly used the word 'coarseness' instead of 'roughness'.

The answer I should venture to give is that the people of Leeds and Yorkshire, so far as it has been my lot to come in contact with them, are far from being as rough and uncouth or wanting in the external graces and delicacies of life as they are sometimes represented... their external life is touched with much more grace and courtesy than the distant world and even the nearby world is sometimes wont to believe.<sup>109</sup>

Reporting these remarks, the *York Herald* was quick and probably correct to detect damnation with faint praise.

School inspectors were also peripatetics who could be discomfited by Yorkshire brusqueness. In 1879, an inspector named Holmes had experienced ‘uncouthness and incivility’ in Huddersfield, at the hands of school board members and pupils. Such behaviour was ‘one of the standing reproaches upon the Yorkshire character’, in the opinion of a local newspaper, but it found a determinist explanation and some redemptive factors:

If he had stayed in the district a few months longer, he would have been less disgusted with the uncouthness and less offended with the incivility, for he would have seen that the manners of the uneducated are but the reflex of the rough and rude scenery around, and that underneath the broad accent and the brawny breast are concealed hospitable feelings to strangers, sympathy with the distressed, hatred of injustice and sturdy love of fair play.<sup>110</sup>

*The Yorkshireman* and James Burnley, always ready to satirise aspects of the county’s identity, had its fictitious ‘Cockney’ visitor observe that ‘There is a roughness and a readiness, and an honest bluntness about some of the people in this county which, however good their intentions cannot fail sometimes to be offensive’.<sup>111</sup> But whilst the alleged outspokenness of Yorkshire people was acknowledged as being disconcerting to outsiders, it was widely seen as a positive character trait, along with a willingness to resort to violence when necessary. The following passage, while intended to be entertaining, is taken from a ‘Notes and Queries’ column of the sort that generally dealt in hard facts, therefore its appraisal of the Yorkshire character would be taken as containing objective truths by readers of the *York Herald*:

It is an occasionally disagreeable characteristic quality of the Yorkshireman, and especially of the typical ‘Tyke’, that he will give his opinion on things without being invited or desired to do so. This is especially the case when he considers himself assailed or unfairly treated. There is no beating about the bush on such occasions; no attempt to smooth rough corners, or to make use of putty and varnish for the sake of making things sound or look more satisfactory or pleasant. He hits straight from the shoulder, whether in physical encounters or in bandying words.<sup>112</sup>

Vengefulness and the keeping of grudges were often given as Yorkshire traits and a passage from Gaskell’s *Life of Charlotte Brontë* became well known.

I remember Miss Brontë once telling me that it was a saying about round Haworth, ‘Keep a stone in thy pocket seven year; turn it and keep it seven year longer, that it may be ever ready to thine hand when thine enemy draws near.’<sup>113</sup>

This anecdote was widely retold against Yorkshire, for example in an article in *The Scotsman* in 1862, which amplified the theme. This piece was then reproduced in at least

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109 *York Herald*, 20 February 1889.

110 *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 7 October 1879. For evidence that schools inspectors of the late nineteenth century attempted to eradicate or ridicule the use of dialect speech in Yorkshire and elsewhere, see Joan C. Beal, *English in Modern Times 1700-1945* (London: Arnold, 2004), p.187.

111 *The Yorkshireman*, 30 March 1877.

112 ‘Northern Notes and Queries’, *York Herald*, 28 July 1900.

113 Gaskell, *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, p.10

one Yorkshire newspaper under the heading ‘What the Scotch think of Yorkshiremen’, which included the statement that ‘the Yorkshireman is as proud of his implacability as of any other portion of his prominently featured character’.<sup>114</sup> As with the widely reproduced dialect material – such as the picture postcards alleging near moral nihilism – a negative stereotype was adopted as part of the county’s self-identity.

Arguably the most positive single image of a Yorkshireman during the nineteenth century was John Browdie, in Charles Dickens’s *Nicholas Nickleby*. This picaresque novel, which began its serialisation in 1838, was written by Dickens partly in order to expose and extirpate the ‘Yorkshire schools’, clustered around Barnard Castle as depositories for unwanted and illegitimate children.<sup>115</sup> This has been described as Dickens’s ‘grandest crusade’.<sup>116</sup> In prefaces written to accompany editions of *Nicholas Nickleby* from 1839 onwards, Dickens described how he had made an incognito journey to Yorkshire in order to investigate the schools. He met an attorney, ‘a jovial, ruddy, broad-faced man’.

At last, when we had passed a couple of hours or so, very agreeably, he suddenly took up his hat, and leaning over the table and looking me full in the face, said, in a low voice: ‘Weel, Mither, we’ve been vary pleasant toogather, and ar’ll spak’ my moind tiv’ee. Dinnot let the weedur send her lattle boy to yan o’ our school-measthers, while there ‘s a harse to hooold in a’ Lunnun, or a gootther to lie asleep in... Repeating these words with great heartiness, and with a solemnity on his jolly face that made it look twice as large as before, he shook hands and went away. I never saw him afterwards, but I sometimes imagine that I descry a faint reflection of him in John Browdie.’<sup>117</sup>

When the character of Browdie appears in *Nicholas Nickleby*, he is depicted as a fairly young man, physically formidable and, although slow on the uptake, he has a strong sense of morality and repeatedly comes to the aid of Nicholas and Smike. On one occasion he rescues Smike by playing an elaborate trick on Wackford Squeers, taking great glee in doing so – a case of Dickens evoking the ‘Yorkshire Bite’, and expecting his readers to recognise the stereotype. Nicholas Nickleby comments that Browdie’s actions were ‘a fine thing to do and manly too... though it’s not exactly what we understand by “coming Yorkshire over us” in London’.<sup>118</sup> Browdie’s speech pattern might be an example of ‘eye dialect’, the procedure whereby novelists such as Dickens would use orthography and punctuation to suggest regional speech, a method ‘more often impressionistic than entirely systematic’, as Lynda Mugglestone puts it.<sup>119</sup> On the other hand, Dickens did take a serious interest in regional speech, according to G.L. Brook, who analyses Browdie’s dialect in detail.<sup>120</sup> But whatever his authenticity, Browdie was widely accepted as an epitome of Yorkshireness. This is reinforced by the fact that Dickens frequently refers to his character simply as ‘The Yorkshireman’.

<sup>114</sup> From ‘What the Scotch think of Yorkshiremen’, a *Scotsman* article reproduced in the *Rotherham Independent*, 25 March 1862.

<sup>115</sup> Robert L. Patten, ‘From *Sketches* to *Nickleby*’ in John O. Jordan (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Charles Dickens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.26.

<sup>116</sup> Cumberland Clark, *Dickens and the Yorkshire Schools* (London: Chiswick Press, 1918), p.6.

<sup>117</sup> From Charles Dickens, Preface to various editions of *Nicholas Nickleby*, taken here from Clark, *Dickens and the Yorkshire Schools*, pp.17-18.

<sup>118</sup> Charles Dickens, *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* (London: Nelson, undated edition), p.579.

<sup>119</sup> Lynda Mugglestone, ‘Talking Proper’: *The Rise of Accent as a Social Symbol* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.183.

<sup>120</sup> G.L. Brook, *The Language of Dickens* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1970), p. 117 and pp.122-124.



In 1877, James Burnley – in his persona as a Cockney visiting Yorkshire – wrote that ‘the only type of Yorkshireman I knew was Dickens’s John Browdie and I assumed that all Yorkshiremen were John Browdies’.<sup>121</sup> There is a hint of irritation there – and Burnley would have appreciated the irony that the most widely disseminated Yorkshire archetype was the creation of an author whose life revolved around London – but references in the press indicate that Browdie was widely adopted as a symbol of Yorkshiredness throughout the county. In August 1863, the Prince of Wales visited Yorkshire and as he processed through Halifax was ‘evidently amused at the free and easy way of the Yorkshire people’.

... and once he could not refrain from laughing heartily at a broad John Browdie kind of a man who was in the centre of a group. Watching the carriages he at length caught sight of the Prince, and, pointing his finger at his Royal Highness, roared out, ‘That’s ‘e; God bless ‘e, youngster!’<sup>122</sup>

The Yorkshire episodes in *Nicholas Nickleby* took place in the extreme north west of the county, close to the Durham boundary, and Browdie was something of a rural innocent. Even so, inhabitants of the industrialised West Riding, leading a very different mode of existence and speaking a different dialect, could be regarded, by themselves and others, as Browdie types. Some of the more fastidious analysts of Yorkshiredness were troubled by this. Aethelbert Binns, of Wilsden, near Bradford, who wrote extensively on dialect for the *Leeds Mercury*, used Browdie to make a point about the variety of speech in the county.

The Yorkshire dialect words which Charles Dickens makes John Browdie use are as familiar to my ear as are the words which Mark Twain puts into the mouths of the energetic inhabitants of Hawkeye and other scattered and remote towns of Western and Southern America. And yet being a Yorkshireman, a native, say of the south of England would probably expect me to be able to speak John Browdie’s dialectal sentences as easily as I could read the English portion of ‘Nicholas Nickleby’. Such, however, is not the case. I can both read, write and speak a dialect of Yorkshire; but the dialect I know is not the dialect of John Browdie, but of another John, to wit John Hartley. Still, though I have never heard it, I doubt not that John Browdie’s is as much a dialect of Yorkshire as John Hartley’s...<sup>123</sup>

Binns asserts Yorkshire heterogeneity, and yet implicitly accepts that there is an inclusive Yorkshire identity, however irritated he might be that outsiders are unaware of its nuances. John Browdie, however, became a significant element of nineteenth-century Yorkshire identity, being continually represented on stage almost from the time that the serialisation of *Nicholas Nickleby* had been concluded. One actor who made his mark in the role was Samuel Emery (1817-1881), deemed to have ‘a sort of hereditary right to appear as Yorkshire characters’<sup>124</sup> – he was the son of John Emery (1777-1822), an actor brought up in the county who specialised in Yorkshire songs and stage roles, having created the part of the amoral Robert Tyke, in *The School of Reform* (1805). Browdie was an open-hearted contrast to the stereotype of the cunning, vengeful Tyke and was used to lament the apparent passing of older Yorkshire virtues. In 1891 the *North-Eastern Daily Gazette* asked, ‘What has become of the traditional Yorkshireman – the blunt, downright, hard-headed John Browdie – the simple-looking, yet cute and cautious north countryman, whom, the elder Emery was wont to impersonate to the great delight of a

121 *The Yorkshireman*, 20 January 1877.

122 *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 8 August 1863.

123 Aethelbert Binns, ‘Yorkshire Dialect Speech’, *Leeds Mercury*, 9 February 1889.

124 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 24 March 1875.

past generation?<sup>125</sup> The question was tongue-in-cheek, in response to criticisms of the Yorkshire character made by a circuit judge at the York Assizes. But it indicates that an old, somewhat Arcadian Yorkshire identity retained some purchase, as the wide dissemination of North Riding sayings and folklore collated by Richard Blakeborough would demonstrate at the turn of the century.

#### 4. A county of good cheer: Yorkshire alimentary regionalism

A WIDELY promulgated stereotype that Yorkshire people were noted for their generous hospitality might be contrary to much of the county's self-image, but it was a common motif in the press and in nineteenth-century travelogues. 'A typical Yorkshireman's hospitality is very hearty and well-meant, but if you are not in a position to accept it, he, as a rule, regards it as a personal insult,' was a satirical view expressed in *The Yorkshireman*.<sup>126</sup> Hospitality was a trait mostly associated with rural areas, where, wrote Thomas and Katherine Macquoid in 1883, 'the people are ...almost always kind and genial, full of a quaint, racy humour, and, spite of their proverbial thrift, hospitable to strangers'.<sup>127</sup> Murray's *Handbook for Yorkshire*, which went through many editions, drew a contrast between rural and urban parts of the county.

The traveller in Yorkshire will generally find that the people, especially in the more remote districts, are, if rough, very hospitable, and very ready to assist him in any difficulty. The population of the great towns differs, of course, very greatly... but here too civility will always bring civility, and the tourist who has a real desire to examine and to understand the various manufacturing processes will have (if he brings proper introductions) all possible assistance readily afforded to him.<sup>128</sup>

The passage also demonstrates the extent to which, by the mid-nineteenth century, the urban Yorkshire identity was, exogenously and endogenously, intimately related to trade activity.

In the county's press, Yorkshire hospitality would routinely be qualified by adjectives such as 'hearty' and 'proverbial' and could even be used to mitigate dubious practices. When an enquiry was held into irregularities during a Parliamentary election for the southern division of the West Riding, an allegation of corruption whereby electors were plied with beer and liquor was batted aside on the grounds that it 'was infringing on the subject of Yorkshire hospitality'.<sup>129</sup> The theme was widely linked to a notion that Yorkshire was a repository of the quality described as 'good cheer'. Seen from a distant part of the Empire, this could turn Yorkshire into a sentimentalised epitome of old England:

Yorkshire is that country [sic] of England which stands pre-eminently as a synonym for good cheer. Thus the roast beef of Old England is properly associated with Yorkshire pudding, a fleshly symbol of that rich and goodly life of the vale of York with its fat lands and corn and kine.<sup>130</sup>

There is a pre-industrial, almost pre-lapsarian quality to the concept of good cheer. It

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125 *North-Eastern Daily Gazette*, 23 July 1891.

126 *The Yorkshireman*, 30 March 1877.

127 Thomas and Katharine Macquoid, *About Yorkshire* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1883), p.4.

128 John Walker, *Handbook for Yorkshire* (London: Stanford, 1904), p. 48. This is a later edition of what had been *Murray's Handbook* and the passage quoted here appears in the 1867 edition of the latter.

129 *Bradford Observer*, 14 April 1869.

130 Report of Yorkshire Society dinner, *Evening Post*, Wellington (New Zealand), 20 September 1910.

can be seen as a variant of the populist earlier-nineteenth century pre-occupation with the ‘olden time’.<sup>131</sup> Good cheer, dependent as it was on plentiful food and drink in great variety, could be represented as a lost ideal in the wake of industrialisation and urbanisation. At a Dewsbury campaign meeting for the Ten-Hour movement in 1846, Richard Oastler became nostalgic about the prosperity of weavers and croppers in his father’s time...

... having their leg of mutton and their loin of veal; and their Yorkshire Pudding, aye and their currants in their Yorkshire pudding (Cheers and a cry of ‘The machinery has eaten puddings, currants and all’).<sup>132</sup>

At the end of the century, an article headed ‘Yorkshire food and good cheer’ in the *Leeds Mercury* also struck a nostalgic note.

No doubt, Yorkshiremen owe much of their superior mental and physical character to good living. Nearly every district in this great shire is known for some speciality of the table, though some of these may be associated with the past, since rapid communication and Free Trade made the world one vast mart or farm. Yorkshire pudding survives, however, and deservedly has a far wider renown than Norfolk dumpling and Devonshire squab pie.<sup>133</sup>

The extent to which speciality foods could become part of national identity has been explored by several historians. Alex Tyrrell, Patricia Hill and Diane Kirkby coined the phrase ‘alimentary nationalism’ to demonstrate how the commemoration of Robert Burns led to Scottish specialities, especially haggis, achieving gastronomic status and totemic significance in Scotland and among its diaspora.<sup>134</sup> Alimentary regionalism can be sought in Yorkshire sources.

‘There is no lack of good cheer in Yorkshire, but local “plats” are not numerous,’ according to a nineteenth-century guidebook.<sup>135</sup> In fact, the county did have a number of specialities that became nationally known, including Yorkshire teacakes and Yorkshire Christmas pie. The latter dish carried particular connotations of ‘good cheer’, in for example a *Yorkshire Notes and Queries* account of ‘Christmas feasting in the good old times’, when ‘a gigantic Yorkshire pie composed of pheasants, turkeys, plovers, snipes, woodcocks, partridges, ox tongue and hare’ was prepared for the Duke of Devonshire in 1762.<sup>136</sup> More widespread were Yorkshire spice cakes, baked in the shape of a loaf, loaded with dried fruit and traditionally served with cheese.<sup>137</sup> This was the subject of one of

131 Peter Mandler, ‘“In the olden time”: Romantic history and English national identity, 1820-1850’ in Laurence W. B. Brockliss and David Eastwood (eds), *A union of multiple identities: the British Isles, 1750-1850* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp.78-92. Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (London: Yale University Press, 1997). See also books and articles which analyse ‘Victorian medievalism’, such as Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot* (London: Yale University Press, 1981).

132 *The Northern Star*, 28 November 1846.

133 ‘Yorkshire Food and Good Cheer’, *Leeds Mercury*, 16 May 1896.

134 Alex Tyrrell, Patricia Hill and Diane Kirkby, ‘Feasting on National Identity: Whisky, Haggis and the Celebration of Scottishness in the Nineteenth Century’, in Diane Kirkby and Tanya Luckins (eds), *Dining on Turtles. Food Feasts and Drinking in History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp.46-63. See also Elizabeth Buettner, ‘Haggis in the Raj: Private and Public Celebrations of Scottishness in Late Imperial India’, *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol LXXXI, 2: No 212: October 2002, 212-239.

135 Walker, *Handbook for Yorkshire*, p. 50.

136 Harold Peat, ‘Christmas feasting in the “good old times” of last century’, in Chas F. Forshaw (ed.), *Yorkshire Notes and Queries*, Vol I (Bradford: Henry Casaubon Derwent, 1905), 300.

137 Andrea Broomfield, *Food and Cooking in Victorian England* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2007), pp. 75 and 153. Alan Davidson, *The Oxford Companion to Food* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006),

James Burnley's satires. At Christmas his fictitious Cockney was offered

what I thought then, and think still, to be the most horrible mixture yet conceived – spice cake and cheese. I politely declined to take any, not knowing that I was hurting anybody's feelings by my refusal. At another house, spice cake and cheese was again produced and, merely thinking at the time it was rather a strange coincidence, I again refused it. I made a third call and lo! Spice cake and cheese was again produced. I then thought that this must be the staple food of Yorkshire. Wild horses should not drag me to a meal of spice cake and cheese...<sup>138</sup>

The dish that achieved the greatest significance as part of the county's cultural identity was Yorkshire pudding. In terms of its ingredients – egg, flour and milk – it had no *terroir* significance, and a simple batter pudding was probably widespread in the south as well as the north of England.<sup>139</sup> Hannah Glasse's *The Art of Cookery Made Plain & Easy* (1747) first described the dish as 'A Yorkshire Pudding' and provided instructions that would have ensured the dish was light and crisp, which became its distinctive quality.<sup>140</sup> This enabled writers in the Yorkshire press to make frequent allegations that it was only in the county that genuine Yorkshire pudding could be found: 'Somehow or other people outside our own shire of many acres never produce a Yorkshire pudding in the same perfection as we do ourselves', according to a Sheffield newspaper.<sup>141</sup> 'The best of all puddings was a Yorkshire pudding – if only people knew how to make it,' the politician Sir Albert Rollit told a Huddersfield audience in 1894. He was 'proud to think that nobody did know how to make it outside of Yorkshire'.<sup>142</sup> There was considerable press comment in Yorkshire after it had been revealed that the favourite dish of the Princess of Wales was Yorkshire pudding.<sup>143</sup> This was felt to be 'a compliment paid to the cuisine of the county, for Yorkshire pudding is never made in its perfection out of the county of broad acres any more than Devonshire cream can be got outside Devonshire or Suffolk dumplings outside Suffolk'.<sup>144</sup>

The practice of serving squares of Yorkshire pudding, with gravy, as a first course in order to suppress the appetite for meat was widely remarked.<sup>145</sup> One of the dialect postcards in the 'Yorkshire Arms, Toasts and Sayings Series' illustrated by Jack Broadrick for E.T.W. Dennis and Sons in the early 1900s depicts a family around the table. 'Yan at eats maist pudden gets maist meeat' is the caption, an intended paradox [Figure 3]. In the opinion of food historian Jennifer Stead the practice means that 'Yorkshire pudding is tarred with the brush of the county character'. The manner in which she amplifies

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pp.859-860. For the possible origin of spice cake in eighteenth century York, see Laura Mason, 'York Ham and other "Regional foods"', in Eileen White (ed.) *Feeding A City: York* (Totnes: Prospect Books, 2000), pp.237-253.

138 *The Yorkshireman*, 30 March 1877.

139 Davidson, *Oxford Companion to Food*, p.860.

140 Jennifer Stead. 'Prodigal Frugality: Yorkshire Pudding and Parkin, Two Traditional Yorkshire Foods' in C.Anne Wilson (ed.), *Traditional Food East and West of the Pennines* (Stroud: Sutton, 1994), p.147.

141 *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 16 November 1876.

142 *Huddersfield Chronicle and West Yorkshire Advertiser*, 15 September 1894.

143 She had listed it in a 'Confessions' book that she and the Prince of Wales had been asked to complete while straying at Belvoir Castle in 1865. The Prince's favourite dish was truffles aux Perigord – *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 8 August 1885.

144 *Leeds Mercury*, 7 September 1895.

145 See, for example, the lampoon of a Yorkshireman from the *Manchester Times* in 1885, reproduced above.



**Figure 3:** Yorkshire pudding as appetite suppressant. From the 'Yorkshire Arms, Toasts and Sayings' series of picture postcards pub. E.T.W. Dennis, 1907, illust. by Jack Broadrick



this theme is an echo of nineteenth-century constructs of Yorkshireness as she devises determinist explanations for the evolution of a simple batter dish.

Yorkshiremen were notorious for their sharp practices, and for centuries, 'to have the Yorkshire put on you' or to suffer the 'Yorkshire bite' was to be cheated. At the same time, Yorkshire hospitality was fabled. So Yorkshire pudding is a triumphal marriage of those conflicting aspects of the Yorkshire character – meanness and liberality. It is cheap and hugely filling. In Yorkshire it was always, and still is, to be eaten on its own as first course, cut into very large squares with good gravy. There is also an economy of effort – it saves one fiddling about with a pudding cloth or boiling water specially for the pudding. When roasting meat, who not simply roast the pudding too?<sup>146</sup>

Stead also provides the useful comment that by the early part of Victoria's reign, England's national dish, which had been roast beef and plum pudding, was now roast beef and Yorkshire pudding.<sup>147</sup> This is a symbol of the way that Yorkshireness and Englishness were fully compatible, or the extent to which the latter was a mosaic of regional identities.

When societies of Yorkshire exiles or émigrés met, whether in London, other parts of the United Kingdom or throughout the Empire, their annual dinners would strive to reflect the cuisine of the home county, although very often sheer quantity and variety rather than regional culinary specialities were deemed to denote Yorkshireness, as in this 1898 report in a Canadian newspaper.

The company adjourned to the supper room, where the good old Yorkshire dishes and dainties were rapidly disposed of, the menu consisting of beef, mutton, veal, ham, tongue, rabbit pies, pork pies, relishes, all kinds of cakes, custards and pies dear to the hearts of the Yorkshire people.<sup>148</sup>

It became common to produce a menu in which the courses were interspersed with archly humorous Yorkshire dialect phrases. The convention of naming certain dishes in French often added an extra linguistic layer. In 1900 the *Leeds Mercury* reported on the fifth annual dinner of the Yorkshire Society of New Zealand and furnished the menu. Only three dishes – Yorkshire pudding, York ham and the combination of apple pie and cheese – could be described as county specialities, so dialect compensated for any shortfall in alimentary regionalism :

146 Stead, 'Prodigal Frugality', p.146. She does not refer to the theory advanced in the nineteenth century that 'Yorkshire bite' was a reference to hospitality.

147 Ibid., p. 143.

148 From a report of the Fourth Annual Yorkshire 'At Home', *Daily Nor'Wester*, Manitoba, 1 March 1898.



**Figure 4:** Yorkshire as a county of good cheer. From a picture postcard pub. E.T.W. Dennis, c.1907, illust. by Jack Broadrick.

NAH, LADS, LET'S TUK IN!  
 Oysters on Shell  
 "Sam up yer spoons, chaps, and get agate"  
 Hare Soup  
 Soles a la Venetienne  
 "Tooithsome bits, theese, aw'm sewer yo'll loike 'em"  
 Chicken sauté a la Marengo  
 Lamb Cutlets a la Villeroy.  
 "T' mainstays o' th' ewniverse"  
 Baron of Beef with Yorkshire Pudding  
 Roast Turkey and Seasoning  
 Boiled Fowl and Rice  
 York Ham  
 Vegetables  
 "Nah, then, chaps, for t'sweet stuff an' spices,  
 Yer ditherin, slitherin, pastry an' ices"  
 Plum Pudding and Brandy Sauce.  
 Apple Pie and Cheese  
 Mince Pies. Jellies  
 Patisserie Francaise  
 THEREE !!!  
 "Doan't ax mi ta hev ony moor"<sup>149</sup>

It can be seen here – as elsewhere in this thesis – that Yorkshire identity was frequently something humorous and is here a means of puncturing the pomposity of events such as formal dinners attended by colonial dignitaries. Variants of the menu above were stereotypical enough to result in the artist Jack Broadrick producing a picture postcard *Yorkshire Menu*, published in the early 1900s [Figure 4]. Such material acts as a contrast to the 'Yan at eats maist pudden gets maist meeat' stereotype and creates a contrapuntal identity of Yorkshire as a region of plenty and good cheer.

## Conclusion

The provincial press of the nineteenth century is not the super-abundant source for regional identities that might be anticipated. Nevertheless, it has proved possible to collate diverse strands and themes from some of Yorkshire's leading newspapers that help to illuminate the county's perception of itself.

The determination with which Yorkshire newspapers enumerated the county's eminent

<sup>149</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 8 September 1900. Punctuation, alignment etc rendered here as in the newspaper.

and infamous personalities demonstrates the desire to create a sense of regional genius. The press aided the process whereby a sense of pan-Yorkshire identity spread outwards from the gentry, and the widely attested role in this process played by spectator sport, particularly county cricket, is reinforced. The episode of Lord Hawke's testimonial, as evidence of his populist appeal in the 1890s, can be deployed as a tangential but telling illumination of this theme.

It is not possible to state that Lancashire was seriously developed as an 'other' to Yorkshire. It was just as frequently regarded as the 'sister county', demonstrating a sense of fellow purpose between contiguous if contrasting industrial areas. When there was an edge to the relationship it qualified as a 'jolly rivalry', in the words of Lord Hawke. A belief that Yorkshire was historically a county of good cheer, hospitality and alimentary abundance was also a theme promulgated by the county's press and helps to provide a point of intersection between Englishness and Yorkshireness.

The newspaper press of a county or region plainly played an implicit and explicit role in a process of the construction and propagation of regional identities which acted as a parallel or countervailing force to nationalising cultural tendencies. Beyond the county's newspaper press there was a secondary tier of regional journalism which also promises to be a fruitful source in the search for Yorkshireness.

## *The Yorkshireman*, county literary culture and self-satire

### 1. 'By far the smartest journal of its kind'

IN its edition of 27 May 1899, the periodical *The Yorkshireman* included a self-promoting advertisement which claimed that it possessed the largest circulation and was 'the best illustrated, the most influential, the oldest established of any journal of its class out of London'. Furthermore, 'advertisers who want remunerative and immediate results and are desirous of popularising their goods in the wealthiest and most densely populated districts in the country will find *The Yorkshireman* the best medium at their command'. This 'bull ad' – to use journalistic parlance for such insertions – appeared in what was issue no 1,093 of the weekly magazine, so the claim to be the oldest-established such journal might have had some validity.<sup>1</sup> The other claims were more contestable, but they could have been legitimate earlier in the life of *The Yorkshireman*. In 1884, a rival publication acknowledged that 'after a slow start it became the most celebrated, most widely circulated and by far the smartest journal of its kind'.<sup>2</sup> However, by May 1899, a long-standing reader would have recognised that the magazine was in editorial decline, not least because of its practice of re-cycling cartoons and even text articles from earlier editions. Despite its self-confident assertions, *The Yorkshireman* ceased to appear, having been consistently published since January 1875.

*The Yorkshireman* belonged to a category of Victorian periodicals which were often referred to as 'comic papers', although much of their content was serious in nature. They were published, often for a short span, in many urban centres.<sup>3</sup> Most easily summed up as regional or local equivalents of *Punch*, these publications – almost invariably sold at the cover price of one penny – provided a tier of journalism which complemented the burgeoning local newspaper press and, like the latter, they can be seen in part as a consequence of the repeal of the 'taxes on knowledge', which, by 1873, resulted in some 900 periodicals of all descriptions, including newspapers, being issued in the provinces.<sup>4</sup> Newspapers reported the local, regional and national news in some depth, while the comic papers provided a satirical commentary that would occasionally incur legal retribution. The closure of the short-lived *Yorkshire Busy Bee*, first issued in Leeds in August 1881, was probably hastened by libel actions brought against it in 1883.<sup>5</sup>

1 In fact, other regional comic papers pre-dated and survived *The Yorkshireman*. E.G. *The Porcupine* (Liverpool), 1860-1915; *The Town Crier* (Birmingham), 1863-1919; *The Dart* (Birmingham), 1876-1911.

2 *Toby*, the *Yorkshire Tyke*, 29 March 1884.

3 In addition to those which will be referred to in this chapter, examples from the 1860s-80s include the *Hull Town Crier*, the *Hull Bellman*, *The Irontown Beadle* (Sheffield), *Shotover Papers* (Oxford), *The Watchdog* (Sheffield), *Huddersfield Punch*, *Nottingham Lamb*, *The Octopus* (Brighton), *The Oldham Liberal Elector*, *The Wasp*, *The Porcupine* (both Liverpool), *Bosh* (Brighton), *Comus*, *The Sphinx* and *The City Lantern* (all Manchester), *The Dart*, *The Town Crier* and *The Owl* (all Birmingham)..

4 Altick, *English Common Reader*, p.356. See also Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press*.

5 See reports in *Hull Packet and East Riding Times*, 3 August 1883 and *Leeds Mercury*, 15 September 1883.



Local newspapers usually had a declared political allegiance, and this was often the case with the comic papers. In its first edition, the *Sheffield Rasp* – describing itself as a ‘Comic, Satiric and Political Journal’ – stated that its politics would be Liberal.<sup>6</sup> The Leeds paper *Toby, the Yorkshire Tyke*, claimed that it would have ‘no animosities’ and would display ‘rigid impartiality’,<sup>7</sup> although it soon showed that it was determinedly Tory, campaigning hard in 1884 on the behalf of a Conservative candidate at elections in Bradford.<sup>8</sup> *The Yorkshireman*, however, frequently asserted its apoliticism, as in its comment in 1888 that it was ‘chained neither to Liberalism nor Toryism, but makes fun of or gives credit to one or the other, according to their deserts’.<sup>9</sup> In general it held to this creed, and indeed opened up its columns to argument in favour of socialism. But although the politics and politicisation of the comic papers varied greatly, they had several common and defining features. These included cartoons, gossip columns, a tendency to moralise and articles that provided a detailed examination, amounting to anthropological ‘thick description’, of the local urban scene. Comic verse, some of it in dialect, was heavily featured, and serialised fiction was also common.

The inter-disciplinary use of periodicals is a well-established component of nineteenth-century studies. It has been argued that ‘civilisation may never again have so sensitive an instrument for registering its course as the Victorian periodical press’.<sup>10</sup> For Michael Wolff, newspapers and periodicals occupied an unrivalled position as repositories of the general life of Victorian England.<sup>11</sup> The contention in the present chapter is that the provincial comic papers, focussing as they did so intensely on their locale, can be used as a source for the study of regional identities. As a cultural and social history resource in general, these periodicals have not been greatly exploited and have not received thorough bibliographical attention.<sup>12</sup> They can be difficult to identify in the first place and there can be problems in locating complete or substantial runs of a given publication. Few if any have yet been covered by a digitisation programme. Hence they belong to a category of periodicals sometimes characterised as ‘submerged’.<sup>13</sup> Recently, however, more use has been made of this sub-genre of Victorian journalism. Aled Jones explores how *The Dart* in Birmingham was an oppositional force to major municipal developments.<sup>14</sup> Simon Gunn uses the satirical magazines of Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds as primary sources for an investigation into the construction of urban bourgeois culture in Victorian

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6 *The Sheffield Rasp*, 20 December 1873.

7 *Toby, the Yorkshire Tyke*, 6 October 1883.

8 *Toby, the Yorkshire Tyke*, 26 April 1884.

9 *The Yorkshireman*, 25 April 1888.

10 J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. Van Arsdell, *Victorian Periodicals, a Guide to Research* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1978), p.5.

11 Michael Wolff, ‘Charting the Golden Stream’, *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, Vol 13 (1971), 23-38.

12 Details and descriptions of a large number of Victorian comic journals, mostly published in London and held in an American collection are in Jerold J. Savory, ‘An Uncommon Comic Collection: Humorous Victorian Periodicals in the Newberry Library’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 1984, Vol 17 (3), 94-102. None of the Yorkshire periodicals is listed.

13 The term is employed by Aled Jones in ‘*The Dart* and the damning of the sylvan stream: journalism and political culture in the late Victorian city’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 2002, Vol 35 (1), 2-17.

14 *Ibid.*

England.<sup>15</sup> Henry Miller has compared the content of the provincial comic papers to that of *Punch*, finding that the latter either ignored or had no understanding of provincial Britain, where the satirical magazines concentrated on local identities and largely ignored national symbols such as John Bull and Britannia. Miller also argues that the tendency of the provincial magazines to employ London-based cartoonists meant that these publications were not particularly useful for the historian seeking local differences.<sup>16</sup> In the case of *The Yorkshireman*, it will be shown, this objection does not fully apply, for the magazine had its own prolific staff artist and carried many cartoons that reflected and projected West Riding stereotypes. The magazine's very title implies a strong regionalism. Also, the publication's origins can be traced to a Yorkshire literary coterie which demonstrably did have a cultural agenda for the region.

There is a theoretical debate over whether periodicals should be regarded as reflections of the culture and period in which they were located, or whether they played an active part in the construction of that culture. Michael Wolff has allowed both possibilities. On the one hand, newspapers and periodicals were unrivalled as 'repositories of the general life of Victorian England', but equally, 'an opinion, an idea, did not exist until it had registered itself in the press'.<sup>17</sup> In the light of subsequent theoretical and historiographical developments, Lyn Pykett sought to challenge or refine the 'reflection model', concluding that 'the periodical press is now defined not as a mirror reflecting Victorian culture, but as... a constitutive medium of Victorian culture which is now seen as interactive'.<sup>18</sup> Gunn, using the periodical press as a reflection of the construction of Victorian middle-class culture, has challenged Pykett, implicitly and explicitly.<sup>19</sup> A position more akin to Wolff's original compromise is probably appropriate. *The Yorkshireman*, and the other periodicals that will be referred to, was written and illustrated by a fairly small body of men (and a much smaller number of women) with literary and artistic ambitions who occupied an ambiguous place in the industrialised society which they inhabited and observed. They undoubtedly put their own construction on the world around them, but also absorbed and propagated many of its preoccupations and prejudices.

This chapter provides an outline of the history of *The Yorkshireman*, beginning with an analysis of some of the periodicals that preceded it. While the narrative framework is erected, *The Yorkshireman* and some of its contemporaries will be examined for themes which seem to construct or reflect a regional identity and for preoccupations that had a regional specificity.

Some limitations must be acknowledged. For most of its existence, *The Yorkshireman* was published in Bradford and much of its attention was given to the social, trade and cultural affairs of that city and of Leeds, plus some other West Riding urban centres. The

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15 Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

16 Henry Miller, 'The Problem with Punch', *Historical Research* Vol LXXXII, No 216 (May, 2009), 285-302.

17 Wolff, 'Charting the Golden Stream', 26.

18 Lyn Pykett, 'Reading the Periodical Press: Text and Content', in Laurel Brake, Aled Jones, Lionel Madden (eds), *Investigating Victorian Journalism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), p.7.

19 Gunn, *Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, p.6.

magazine did make attempts to broaden its coverage and therefore live up to its name and become a pan-Yorkshire publication, which indicates the presence of county/regionalist sentiment. But these attempts would generally prove abortive and large areas of the county, such as the Dales, would virtually be ignored. The historical significance of the city of York was acknowledged and its contemporary politics received some coverage. But at the same time, a sense of otherness was continually bestowed on York, as if it was a somewhat anachronistic irrelevance in the context of a modern Yorkshire defined by the industrial West Riding. As Dave Russell has pointed out, writers had many different ‘imagined Yorkshires’ that they could deploy as the situation demanded, ranging from a modern, vibrant industrial community typified by the West Riding, to a place of deep-rooted historical significance, exemplified by, inter alia, York and Beverley, or ‘a repository of rural peace, virtue and beauty’.<sup>20</sup> The survey of Yorkshire regional fiction which occupies a later chapter concludes that a proto-industrial, ruralist identity was the one predominantly sought by its writers and readers. This romanticised/regressive vision of the region stands in contrast to the progressive urbanism which emerges from the journalism of the Yorkshire comic papers.

## 2. The Yorkshire Literary Union

THE comic papers, satirical magazines or penny papers that became ubiquitous in the later-nineteenth century formed part of the wave of periodicals that gathered momentum after the abolition of the ‘taxes on knowledge’. ‘Cheap journalism’, as Altick describes it, became an increasingly attractive field for the entrepreneur.<sup>21</sup> Before these developments, magazines published in Yorkshire were often either highly specialised or aimed at a prosperous readership.

In 1840, *Yorkshire Family Magazine*, which lasted for seven issues between April and October of that year, was priced at sixpence (the first number was eightpence). ‘Conducted’ by James Dibdin Hubbard, who was editor of the *Wakefield Journal*, this periodical was described as a ‘Journal of Religion, Liturature [sic], Science and Art’. It contained material of general interest, with some emphasis on Protestantism (engravings and biographies of Luther and Wycliff) and had little significant regional content. Indeed, its first story was set in Leicestershire, although there were poems about Kirkstall Abbey by J.B. Walker of Leeds,<sup>22</sup> and ‘Sandal in Olden Times’, from the pen of William Henry Leatham Esq, of Woodthorpe Hall, near Wakefield.<sup>23</sup>

The first periodical to carry the title *The Yorkshireman* was published monthly in Pontefract between 1833 and 1837. It was described as ‘A Religious and Literary Journal’ and was ascribed to ‘A Friend’. The literary content amounted to little more than translations of Aesop’s *Fables*. The rest of the text, collated in five volumes, consisted

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20 Russell, ‘Sport and Identity’, 213.

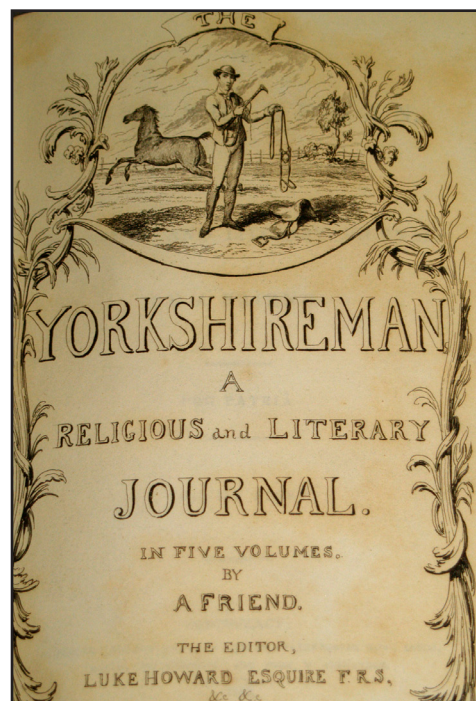
21 Altick, *English Common Reader*, p. 331.

22 *Yorkshire Family Magazine*, April 1840.

23 Ibid., May 1840.

of arguments for Quakerism and against the Established Church. When the complete run was gathered in bound volumes the editor was given as Luke Howard, well known as a manufacturing chemist and meteorologist as well as a Quaker.<sup>24</sup> This magazine had no regional agenda and it must be presumed that its title simply derived from the place of publication. But in one incongruous and possibly unintentional respect this periodical does help to emphasise a significant aspect of Yorkshire cultural identity during the nineteenth century. The title page of the first bound volume of Howard's *Yorkshireman* includes an engraved illustration depicting a groom or jockey holding a crop and bridle, with a saddle on the ground. Behind him, a spirited horse gallops in a fenced paddock [Figure 1]. There is no obvious thematic link with Quakerism. Indeed, this rather louche image, with its hint of sport and gambling, verges on the irreligious. It can be speculated that the printer, needing to embellish a title page on which the word 'Yorkshireman' was prominent, commissioned or reached for a stock image that to him was most synonymous with the county. The identification of Yorkshire with horses, racing and, in particular, duplicitous horse trading was long established and it continued through the nineteenth century, although some cultured and urbanised Yorkshire people would begin to find this association increasingly irritating. 'It is one of the peculiarities of the cockney intellect to regard everything in Yorkshire as of a horsey character, when, in truth, if we take the county in its entirety, it stands, in point of the horse knowledge of its population, much below other counties,' argued the Bradford-published *Yorkshireman* in 1882.<sup>25</sup>

The periodicals described so far suggest that in the first part of the nineteenth century an apparent assertion of regionalism in a title amounted to little more than a reference to the place where it happened that a magazine was published. The readers neither expected nor perhaps desired any expression or exploration of regional identity. However, by the second half of the century, a new type of periodical was identifying much more closely with its locale. For example, the very title of *The Sheffield Rasp*, a penny paper with avowed Liberal, if not radical sympathies, which began publication in December 1873, implied a close identification with the city's metal trades and this continued in the magazine's text, where trade metaphors and symbols abounded. A poet who assumed the pseudonym Vulcan wrote an address 'To Master Rasp'.



**Figure 1:** Cover of the bound edition of the 1833-1837 Quaker journal *The Yorkshireman*, with image of horse and jockey

Special Collections, Brotherton Library,  
University of Leeds.

24 *The Yorkshireman* (Pontefract), Vol 5 (1837), 387. For the details of Luke Howard's Quakerism and the religious controversy in which he was embroiled, see Jim Burton, 'Howard, Luke (1772-1864)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 204); online edition, May 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13928>, accessed 10 Aug 2009]

25 *The Yorkshireman* (Bradford/Leeds/Huddersfield, subsequently *YM*), 15 April 1882.



*A File, a File for settled bills;  
 A Rasp for each one in the mills.  
 A Punch, the tooth to sharply raise;  
 And Chisels, whetted various ways.  
 All Filesmiths should be well paid,  
 For Files we want in every trade;  
 A fine sharp tooth, avoid a waster  
 And do your best for a good 'mester'<sup>26</sup>*

The *Rasp* appears to have been a short-lived paper.<sup>27</sup> It was in Bradford and Leeds that a literary and cultural project with a regional purpose led to the creation of a relatively long-lived publication, for which the catalyst was James Burnley (1838-1919<sup>28</sup>), a prolific author and journalist who would be a key figure in many areas of Yorkshire regionalist literary culture. Burnley [Figure 2] was born in Shipley, the son of a power-loom weaver and overseer. When he was aged about 12, he worked in a textile mill himself for a time, but then became a solicitor's clerk. In this capacity, he lived and worked in London in the early 1860s, but returned to Yorkshire and in the late 1860s began to write under the name 'Saunterer' for the liberal *Bradford Observer*, for which his contributions were deemed to give 'a literary tone to the paper which few provincial journals possess'.<sup>29</sup> In the analysis of Stephen Wade, it was in Bradford, perhaps more than any other Victorian city, that 'the literary culture around the new aspirations to read and write both high-quality literature and popular narratives was apparent'.<sup>30</sup>

Books which reflect Burnley's descriptive skills include *Phases of Bradford Life* (1871), *West Riding Sketches* (1875) and *Yorkshire Stories Retold* (1895). The *Sketches* describe contemporary life in 'Woolborough' (Bradford) and 'Bington' (Bingley). Whimsical accounts of cricket matches, mummers' plays, a night in Wakefield Gaol, a trip to Saltaire and Saturday concerts and theatre at 'St Gorgon's Hall'<sup>31</sup> are accompanied by the fictionalised story of the life and death of a factory girl who had been cruelly treated and exploited by her father, a North Riding agricultural labourer who came to the city, attracted by high wages. This is an interesting slant on the intra-county migration that was responsible for much of the rapid population increase of Yorkshire towns, with the exception, already noted, of Middlesbrough.

In an unpublished autobiographical typescript, probably completed shortly before his death in 1919, Burnley described Bradford in the 1860s as 'a time of quickened realities... a time of hard, determined prose. And yet it presented an atmosphere not

26 *Sheffield Rasp*, 20 December 1873. The 'mesters' or masters were the characteristic small employers of Sheffield.

27 The British Library Newspaper Collection includes only its first issue. The collection has two issues (27 Jan and 3 Feb, 1869) of an earlier Sheffield periodical, *The Watchdog*.

28 His birth date is given as 1842 in several library catalogues. However, this is not supported by census and birth index information, which suggests 1838

29 W.M. Andrews, 'James Burnley', in Chas F. Forshaw (ed), *The Poets of Keighley, Bingley, Haworth and District* (Bradford: Thornton and Pearson, 1891), p.42

30 Stephen Wade, *In My Own Shire* (London: Praeger, 2002), p.59. In this book (p.66), Wade calls for a reassessment of Burnley. See also Stephen Wade, 'James Burnley: A Victorian for today', *Contemporary Review*, August 1997, read online at [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m2242/is\\_n1579\\_v271/ai\\_19968634](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2242/is_n1579_v271/ai_19968634) [accessed 22 January 2009].

31 i.e. St George's Hall, Bradford, built in 1851 as a 'grandiloquent testimony to commercial civilisation' and a status symbol that provoked the rival city of Leeds to build its Town Hall – see Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem* (London: Phoenix, 2005), pp.247-248. See also Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, pp.153-156.

altogether unfavourable to the growth of literary aspirations.<sup>32</sup> He went on to describe various literary gatherings in the city.

Just below the Piece Hall Yard in Kirkgate there was a kind of literary rendezvous in an upstairs room of an eating house kept by Thomas Nicholson, a brother of John Nicholson, the Airedale poet. This house, devoted by day on its ground floor to the consumption of ‘fours-o’-pie’. ‘beefsteaks and Yorkshire’, and other rough and ready treats for hungry Bradfordians, would have its upper room set apart by night to the ‘feast of reason and the flow of soul’, and into this haunt would occasionally stray for mind-communion John James, the historian of Bradford... Robert Storey, the Craven poet, Ben Preston [arguably the best known Yorkshire dialect poet of the period], Stephen Fawcett [a poet who evoked Yorkshire scenes], James Hird [a Bradford councillor and poet] and others, with mine host Nicholson, portly of presence, smoking his long pipe, presiding.<sup>33</sup>

Later, Burnley became a member of a more organised literary group named the Addison Club and in April 1870 he was present at the preliminary meeting in Leeds of a body that was to be named the Yorkshire Literary Union. This organisation was formally inaugurated on 5 July 1871, at the Philosophical Hall in Leeds.

Its president was William Smith of Morley, described by Burnley as ‘an indefatigable worker on behalf of Yorkshire literature’.<sup>34</sup> In his inaugural address, reported by the *Leeds Mercury*, Smith made the remarkably precise assertion that over the centuries Yorkshire had produced at least 259 individuals ‘deserving the name of poet’. The county’s poetical lineage was traced back to Caedmon, ‘the first and greatest of the Anglo-Saxon poets’. The object of the Union included the ‘general promotion of literary tastes among the members’, to be attained by holding meetings in towns around the county. Also, a journal was to be published, in order to provide an outlet for ‘the tyro in literature’.<sup>35</sup> In October 1871, there duly appeared the first edition of *The Yorkshire Magazine*, published by the Yorkshire Literary Union Ltd, of North Parade, Bradford. The editorial contact was given as J.K. Rowbotham of Leeds, although James Burnley recalled that initially the magazine was produced by committee until continual disagreement resulted in his being asked to edit the publication himself.<sup>36</sup> The opening editorial promised that ‘articles will be brief and varied and will mainly deal with subjects of interest in the three ridings of Yorkshire... we venture to hope that *The Yorkshire Magazine* will receive the sympathy and hearty support of all true Yorkshiremen’.<sup>37</sup> This is an indication that the county could be conceived as a discrete ‘cultural province’.



**Figure 2:** Shipley-born author-journalist James Burnley, from his book *Biskra and the Desert* (1906), an account of a journey made in 1885.

32 James Burnley, *Literary Recollections of Bradford, 1870-1890*, unpublished typescript, Bradford City Library, p.3.

33 Ibid., p.4.

34 Ibid., p.16.

35 *Leeds Mercury*, 6 July 1871.

36 Burnley, *Literary Recollections*, p.17.

37 *The Yorkshire Magazine*, October 1871.

The magazine survived for 39 editions, until June 1875. The contents included serialised novels, almost exclusively located in Yorkshire. They included – from October 1872 to July 1874 – James Burnley’s *Looking for the Dawn*, set in a thinly-disguised Bradford and appraised in a later chapter of this thesis as a significant contribution to the canon of Victorian industrial fiction. *The Yorkshire Magazine* also published philological articles on the county’s dialects. Contributors often sprung to the defence of Yorkshire dialect speech and literature, sometimes arguing for its greater linguistic purity on the grounds of provenance and drawing on some of the racial assumptions that were discussed in Chapter 1. Many ‘Yorkshireisms’ could be traced to the speech of the Angles and Danes, wrote S.Dyer, adding that:

Of the various dialects in England, it must be borne in mind that the northern counties retain many words obsolete in current English: these words are of the genuine Teutonic stock. The pronunciation may seem rough and harsh, but is no doubt the same as used by our forefathers; consequently it must not be considered barbarous. The other counties of England differ from the vernacular by a depraved pronunciation...<sup>38</sup>

Towards the end of its existence, *The Yorkshire Magazine* began to place greater emphasis on antiquarianism and in this it anticipated the publications of the prolific local historian Joseph Horsfall Turner – his *Yorkshire County Magazine*, *Yorkshire Folklore Journal* and *Yorkshire Notes and Queries* of the 1880s and 1890s.

*The Yorkshire Magazine* was a fairly short-lived venture but it and its parent body, the Yorkshire Literary Union, do represent an identifiable project delimited by the county, its borders and its culture. The original aim had been to provide an outlet for Yorkshire writers and usually they chose or were encouraged to write about Yorkshire or to explore its literary and linguistic traditions. The magazine contained little dialect material itself – outside of philological investigation or dialogue in serialised fiction – but it was quick to mount a defence of dialect writing, as if rebutting metropolitan prejudice, as in this somewhat ambivalent passage:

For those who speak the literary dialect... to sneer at those who speak or write in any of the others is an impertinence analogous to that of the clodhopper who guffaws every time he hears a frog-eating Frenchman’s cackle, or a sauerkraut gulping German’s cluck. The local dialect is the dialect in which those who read it *feel*; those who do not feel it have no business to read it – nor write it either.<sup>39</sup>

There is a line of descent from *The Yorkshire Magazine*, which managed 39 issues, and *The Yorkshireman*, which notched up more than a thousand. James Burnley had edited and contributed to the former and he was the co-founder, editor and sometime proprietor of the latter, which first appeared in January 1875, thus overlapping for a few months with its forbear. Burnley did not record the precise motivation for starting a new magazine, stating simply that it ‘evolved’.<sup>40</sup> Below its masthead, *The Yorkshireman* initially described itself as ‘A Monthly Literary Miscellany’, so perhaps there was a desire to dispense with antiquarianism and revert to a more purely literary publication. It did carry some historical material, but was for the most part contemporary in tone and topics. The first serialised novel was Burnley’s own *Second Fiddle*, sub-titled ‘A Yorkshire Story of Today’. It dealt

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38 S.Dyer, ‘Yorkshire Words, Part I’, *Yorkshire Magazine*, October 1872.

39 *Yorkshire Magazine*, November 1872.

40 Burnley, *Literary Recollections*, p.20. In the final extant issue of *The Yorkshire Magazine*, a new serialised novel by Burnley had begun. It was possibly never completed.

with issues of social mobility, as a working-class shoemaker, after coming into money, moved into the ‘millocracy’.

Dialect verse and prose, much of it contributed by the writer and local sage Ben Preston, was heavily featured.<sup>41</sup> The closest thing to an editorial column in the early *Yorkshireman* was a feature, written in dense Bradford dialect, entitled *Ovver t’koils*, attributed to ‘Rasper’. It was perhaps the work of Burnley himself. Effectively, therefore, despite the fact that the bulk of the new magazine was written in Standard English, its editorial voice was initially a Yorkshire dialect voice, meaning that at its inception *The Yorkshireman* was aggressively regional. The magazine would explore the tensions between Standard English speech and local dialect, especially among people who were upwardly mobile or aspired to gentility. The newly-monied central character in Burnley’s *Second Fiddle* was upbraided by his wife for lapsing into ‘homely Yorkshire’ speech by using ‘thee’ and ‘tha’. He responded that ‘Yorkshire’s t’langwidge ‘at I *think* in, an’ it’s langwidge ‘at it comes natteral for me to talk in’.<sup>42</sup>

This passage provides evidence that by the 1870s a prosperous member of the middle classes was expected to have shed most of his regional speech patterns, although elsewhere there is evidence of bi-dialecticism among Yorkshire’s middle classes. This theme is developed in Chapter 6. After the introduction of universal compulsory education, there was an expectation that dialect speech would wither even among the working classes.<sup>43</sup> This was widely regretted by the middle and upper classes. When he inaugurated the Yorkshire Dialect Society, the Marquis of Ripon apologised for not being able to address the meeting in broad Yorkshire himself, but lamented the fact that dialect speech in the county had been seriously impaired by the operations of the Department of Education.<sup>44</sup> James Burnley, writing in his alter ego as ‘Saunterer’, described a colourful character who ‘belongs to the ante-school board period and speaks the vernacular like one of Ben Preston’s moorland heroes’.<sup>45</sup> An anonymous contributor, describing a visit to Bradford from Lancashire, expressed relief that ‘in spite of all our educational machinery, “coals” were still “coils”, “holes” were still “hoils”, “coats” “coits” and so on, and why should they not be so long as the people understand each other and feel more comfortable when using their dialect?’<sup>46</sup> In *The Yorkshireman* in 1876, a contributor signed T.H. made ‘A Plea for Yorkshire Lingo’, which he regarded as not only a pure historical speech form – preserving the language of Shakespeare and Bacon – but also less effete than recently evolved forms of Standard English, which he feared were spreading to the innately conservative working class. The drive to ‘educate, educate, educate’ would mean that

the ancient lingo of this tight little island will be so purified and sublimated that even the class we have called ‘conservative’ will be liberally educated and will ‘haw, haw’ and ‘yaas, yaas’ like

41 Preston was best known as a writer of dialect prose and poetry, but he also wrote frequently in Standard English for *The Yorkshireman* and other regional periodicals.

42 James Burnley, ‘Second Fiddle’, part two, *YM*, March 1875.

43 See Lynda Mugglestone, *Talking Proper: The Rise of Accent as a Social Symbol* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.212; T. Crowley, *Language in History* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp.161-162.

44 The Marquis of Ripon’s Inaugural Address, *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society*, Part I, July 1898, 3-4.

45 ‘Saunterer’ [James Burnley], ‘Highways, Byways and Slyways’, *YM*, 27 January 1887.

46 *YM*, 11 February 1882.



a lord. Instead, too, of speaking from the chest, as the natural man generally does, there will be a universal falsetto – an effeminacy now confined to the superior and liberally-educated young gentleman... There are many super-refined people who draw up their intellectual and social skirts when they hear a ‘bit of real Yorkshire lingo’ as if they were in sight of nasty puddle and were disgusted at having to cross it.<sup>47</sup>

As stated, most of *The Yorkshireman*, even in its early editions, was written in Standard English. The magazine’s contributors, whether they were professional journalists employed by newspapers such as the *Bradford Observer* and the *Yorkshire Post*,<sup>48</sup> or amateur authors and poets engaged in other professions, could broadly be described as educated members of the middle class (with the exception of Ben Preston, an autodidact ex-weaver). They would probably have spoken in a West Riding-accented Standard English. Therefore the ubiquity of and the arguments in favour of Yorkshire dialect in a literary publication such as *The Yorkshireman* reinforce the fact that this form of writing was an assertion of regional as much as class identity. It was espoused not only by dialect-speaking members of the working class, for their own enjoyment and cultural self-reinforcement, but also by a more educated, literary sector of the Yorkshire middle classes, who saw it as an important if vicarious element of their identity too.

One of the conclusions reached by Patrick Joyce in his examination of principally Lancashire dialect material of the nineteenth century is that dialect stood as ‘a marker of regional virtues, set against metropolitan stereotypes of the northerner’.<sup>49</sup> Martha Vicinus regards dialect literature as essentially a vehicle for working class expression, but it also had ‘the advantage of building upon local feeling – *my* region and its culture against the rest of the country’.<sup>50</sup> John Langton concurs that dialect literature principally came from the proletariat of newly industrialised areas but added that ‘its exclusiveness was more to region than to class’.<sup>51</sup> This issue will be considered again during an examination of Yorkshire dialect almanacs, but the fact that a literary magazine which was principally aimed at a middle-class readership would espouse the dialect genre so readily is a demonstration that ‘Yorkshire English’ was a badge of trans-class regional identity.

There was also an element of dualism. As already mentioned, James Burnley adopted the pseudonym ‘Saunterer’ for much of his observational writings, including his dialect productions. Indeed, he became something of a prototype of the ‘professional Yorkshireman’. By the mid-1880s he had relocated to London and developed his general literary career. But he kept up his ‘Saunterer’ persona and in October 1887 began to contribute a series to the *Leeds Times*, entitled ‘T’Yorkshireman i’London’, containing sentiments such as:

I like to lewk at things i’ this gurt city o’ sorra an’ shame, glory an’ bewty, biznass an’ plezzur,  
pleenty an’ want, i’ my owd streytferrad Yorkshire feashion, mezzurin ‘em by t’Yorkshire standard,  
an’ praisin’ an’ blamin’ wi’ all t’Yorkshire heart I hev in me; an’, may be, ye’ll happen see a

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47 T.H., ‘A Plea for Yorkshire Lingo’, *YM*, October 1876.

48 James Burnley describes the backgrounds of some of the magazine’s contributors in his *Literary Recollections*, pp.20-27.

49 Joyce, *Visions of the People*, p.293.

50 Martha Vicinus, *The Industrial Muse: A Study of Nineteenth Century British Working Class Literature* (London: Croom Helm, 1974), p.190.

51 Langton, ‘The Industrial Revolution and the Regional Geography of England’, 160.

toathree dlints o' dayleet or breadths 'o shadda 'at yu woddant get i' t'ordinary way.<sup>52</sup>

It was the convention in *The Yorkshireman* and the county's other periodicals to regard London with horrified fascination. The city was habitually described as 'the modern Babylon' and regarded as morally and communally inferior. 'How utterly selfish and cold these Southerners seemed as they hurried along the streets,' wrote Burnley, reminiscing on a youthful spell living in London, which he found 'was only Bradford on a gigantic scale, minus the factory chimneys and the smoke'.<sup>53</sup> For another writer, London was 'the stoniest city in the kingdom', and a place where 'ruined Yorkshire people' could conceal themselves.<sup>54</sup>

There are few signs of resentment of political or economic hegemony exercised by London. A sense that the economic destiny of cities like Bradford and Leeds, despite the frequent slumps in trade, lay in their own hands was still strong in the 1870-1890s, just as provincial municipalities retained a large measure of political autonomy. But there was resentment of the cultural predominance of London. Writers in Yorkshire periodicals were easily rankled by 'Cockney' criticism of the county's literary pretensions.<sup>55</sup> In September 1876, the *Daily Telegraph* reviewed a new anthology of the work of the 'Airedale poet', John Nicholson, and displayed 'scornful arrogance and contempt almost unparalleled', according to an indignant and lengthy rebuttal in *The Yorkshireman*.<sup>56</sup> If the poems of another Airedale poet, Stephen Fawcett, had come out of London they would have gone round the world, according to an 1885 article by William Scruton. 'But published as they were in a provincial town like Bradford where the atmosphere smells more of warp and weft, and stocks and shares than it does of culture and learning, they were only the delight of a few men of taste here and there'.<sup>57</sup>

Resentment of London's cultural hegemony ran parallel with an acceptance that an ambitious Yorkshire person in the literary field would and perhaps should make the journey south. In the case of James Burnley himself, 'it was in the nature of things that he would sooner or later have gravitated to... the city of letters', although 'the wrench of severance from his old and much-loved county must have been a severe one'.<sup>58</sup>

Once a Yorkshire person had relocated to London, he should at least remain true to his origins. Burnley, in 'Saunterer' mode, was critical of those who

mak' thersenns into Londoners as fast as ivver they can, as if Yorkshire wor summat to be shamed on. They don like Dukes, an' talk like dickybirds, an' if ye happen to come dahn on 'em wi' a 'Hah are ta lad?' or a 'What's ta shappin'en, Dawdy?' they're fit to sink thre t' grahnd.<sup>59</sup>

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52 *Leeds Times*, 29 October 1887.

53 'Saunterer' (James Burnley), 'Queer Experiences', *YM*, 20 January 1877.

54 *YM*, 29 June 1892.

55 The term 'Cockney' was used indiscriminately for any Londoner, possibly Southerner, irrespective of social class.

56 'A Cockney Critic on John Nicholson', *YM*, November 1876.

57 William Scruton, 'Stephen Fawcett', *YM*, 2 May 1885.

58 *YM*, 10 August 1895. This article included a passage on Burnley from T.Broadbent Towsdale's *North Country Poets*: 'The Mighty Modern Babylon, which has lured from the shire of many acres hundreds of its ablest offspring, grievously robbed Yorkshire in 1885, when she gave to James Burnley a permanent call to take up a position of honour and literary trust in the capital of the world of letters'.

59 *Leeds Times*, 29 October 1887. Another Yorkshire writer who relocated to London, to pursue a career as a playwright, was Fred W.Broughton, who remained a prolific contributor to Yorkshire periodicals. On 30

There was pride when Yorkshiremen made their mark in London. In 1893 it was reported that in Government offices, Yorkshire and Lancashire men were more successful than those from any other portion of the kingdom. ‘It is said that in the patent office alone, eighty per cent of the men employed hail from Lancashire and Yorkshire and that in the office named there is only one real Cockney. The “young men from the country” do not always come to grief in the modern Babylon’.<sup>60</sup> But sometimes too great an exposure to London society was deemed to have a deleterious moral effect. The Leeds-born John Thomas North (1842-1896) – known as Colonel North because of his militia rank – became one of the wealthiest men of the Victorian period, known as the ‘nitrate king’ for his exploitation of the natural fertilizer to be found in Peru. He continued to be a benefactor of Leeds – bestowing Kirkstall Abbey on the city – but became prominent in London society, living in luxury in Eltham. In 1891 *The Yorkshireman* preached that he should

*Come back to old Yorkshire, dear Colonel,  
Once more a true Yorkshireman be,  
Give your riches a rest, let go title and crest,  
And be independent and free.*<sup>61</sup>

Equally, there was resentment when aristocratic loucheness from beyond the county borders contaminated Yorkshire. In 1890 the ‘Royal Baccarat Scandal’, which embroiled the Prince of Wales in a court case, occurred at Tranby Croft in the East Riding. When it became public knowledge in 1891, *The Yorkshireman* was indignant:

*The baccarat band that down to Yorkshire came,  
And by their wild exploits such hubbub roused,  
Were welcomed well and comfortably housed,  
The sad return an endless blot of shame.*<sup>62</sup>

In these two fragments of topical verse, both published in 1891, *fin-de-siècle* Yorkshire was represented by its principal periodical as a region that was on a higher moral plane and less suffocated by social pretensions and conventions than the ‘modern Babylon’ that lay to the south.

### 3. Arthur North and the delineation of the Yorkshire character

IN 1877 *The Yorkshireman* began to appear weekly. The magazine, it was claimed, was ‘widely read in all parts of the county’, and readers would be ‘ensured of a constant succession of stories, sketches, dialect pieces, poems and satirical papers by the best writers and poets of the counties of Yorkshire and Lancashire’.<sup>63</sup> This paragraph hints at a shared literary culture between the ‘sister counties’. At various times it was claimed that *The Yorkshireman* was sold at newsagents throughout both counties.<sup>64</sup> There were few expressions of Yorkshire-Lancashire antagonism in the magazine, apart from occasional

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July, 1881, he began a series on ‘Yorkshiremen in London’ for *The Yorkshireman*.

60 *YM*, 3 January 1893.

61 *YM*, 1 July 1891.

62 *YM*, 10 June 1891.

63 *YM*, October 1876.

64 eg *YM*, 5 January 1895.

light-hearted invocations of the Wars of the Roses with reference to sporting fixtures.<sup>65</sup> In 1887 it was reported that two young sellers of a football special edition at a match in Manchester needed to display Yorkshire ‘cuteness’ in order to deal with ‘the sharpers of Cottonopolis’.<sup>66</sup> But the relative dearth of trans-Pennine antagonism supports an analysis that the supposed rivalry is something of a subsequent exaggeration. If, however, there is little sign of deep seated rivalry between the two counties, the life, industry and culture of Lancashire were mostly ignored by the West Riding periodicals, with only the holiday destinations of Blackpool and Morecambe being given any prominence. Tony Collins found a similar absence of ‘northern corporate feeling’ in Lancashire journals and newspapers of the later-nineteenth century.<sup>67</sup>

When it became a weekly in January 1877, the character of *The Yorkshireman* altered somewhat. The ‘monthly literary miscellany’ was now ‘An illustrated journal of humour, satire and criticism’.<sup>68</sup> Serialised fiction would largely be replaced by observational journalism, humorous columns and serials, satirical verse, large numbers of cartoons and increasing amounts of sports coverage. Theatre in Bradford and Leeds, especially pantomime, was covered in detail. The magazine, now a more commercial production, began to carry larger quantities of advertising.<sup>69</sup> The editorial written in dialect by ‘Rasper’ no longer appeared, replaced by a Standard English gossip column entitled ‘Whispering Gallery’ that would remain for the rest of the magazine’s existence. It consisted of satirical paragraphs commenting on items of Yorkshire news and politics and its allusive nature meant that it expected and reflected an absorption by readers in regional current events such as municipal affairs, principally in the urban centres of the West Riding, and especially Bradford and Leeds. Meanwhile, comment columns such as ‘The Pillory’ or ‘Saturday Sermon’ would adopt a censorious tone on aspects of urban morality. Yorkshire dialect was never abandoned. For many years, Ben Preston would continue to contribute to *The Yorkshireman*.<sup>70</sup> The fact that his dialect prose and that of other contributors sat without editorial comment alongside the Standard English content of the magazine helped to suggest a strong sense of Yorkshire bi-dialecticism.

The first publisher of *The Yorkshireman* was stated to be James Clayton, of Bradford. Later, until August 1880, the periodical was printed and published by Thomas Brear, a Bradford publisher who died in 1882. From September 1880, James Burnley was stated to be the publisher.<sup>71</sup> By July, 1881, Burnley was in partnership with David Hogarth. In December of that year an advertisement appeared which stated that James Burnley,

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65 The tone of an 1891 report on a cricket match suggests that the Roses motif was still a novelty – ‘I have just returned from witnessing the first day’s doings in the match (the modern bloodless counterpart of the Wars of the Roses) between those old-time rivals Lancashire and Yorkshire’ – *YM*, 17 June 1891.

66 *YM*, 17 March 1887.

67 Tony Collins, *Rugby’s Great Split : Class, Culture, and the Origins of Rugby League Football* (London: Routledge, 1998), p.55.

68 *Yorkshireman* letterhead, WYAS, Bradford, DB16 C15 No 11.

69 *YM* (13 January 1877), claimed to be a ‘first-class medium for advertisements’ on the grounds that it had ‘gained the confidence and support of all classes throughout this large county’.

70 Preston would make social, political and religious comment in the course of extended series with titles such as ‘Tales of My Shopmates’, ‘Pauper Papers’ and ‘Fowk I’ ‘Ahr Street’.

71 The magazine offices were initially at Kirkgate, Bradford, and subsequently at Charles Street, Swan Arcade, Bradford.



‘dealer in artistic specialities, fancy goods and general literature’ was ‘about to decline this business... in order to devote myself more completely to my literary undertakings’ and was selling off his stock ‘to effect a rapid clearance’.<sup>72</sup> This might have been a symptom of financial problems Burnley reportedly experienced in the early 1880s. The Bradford antiquarian William Scruton recorded that *The Yorkshireman* was taken over by W.Byles and Son, proprietors of the Bradford *Observer*, as security for a bad debt.<sup>73</sup> This episode took place in 1883.<sup>74</sup> Burnley was re-engaged as editor, but the magazine’s staff artist Arthur North (1849-1919), who signed his illustrations ‘Ant’, was treated with ‘great shabbiness’ by Burnley and ‘treacherously’ by Byles, according to Scruton.

Before this episode, North had a spell away from *The Yorkshireman* when he started his own comic paper, *The Yorkshire Busy Bee*, first issued in Leeds on 20 August, 1881. After two years, this folded and was incorporated into a new Leeds periodical, *Toby, the Yorkshire Tyke*, which first appeared in October, 1883 and continued until September, 1885. North returned to *The Yorkshireman* briefly, before the ‘shabby’ treatment recorded by Scruton caused him to leave again. On 29 March, 1884, *Toby* – edited by a former *Yorkshireman* contributor James W. Richards – carried a satirical article about *The Yorkshireman* and various changes that were taking place at the periodical. The same edition also carried an article by Arthur North ‘concerning comic papers and the people who work them’. Without naming *The Yorkshireman*, he complained about his treatment at the hands of the magazine’s new proprietors. North’s article was parried by a rebuttal in *The Yorkshireman* – written by Burnley at the behest of his new proprietors, according to Scruton – which scorned claims made by the artist that he had been crucial to the success of the magazine.<sup>75</sup> In view of this ill-feeling it is surprising that Arthur North and *The Yorkshireman* should effect a reconciliation, but by August 1884 his cartoons were appearing regularly once more and he also contributed observational text articles, such as a series entitled ‘Prowls in Peculiar Places’ (February 1887). In its critical article of 29 March, 1884, *Toby, the Yorkshire Tyke* had described North as ‘the clever little Ant, who as a delineator of the Yorkshire character is simply unique’. In the early numbers of *The Yorkshire Busy Bee*, North was able to reproduce a quote from a review of the magazine in the *Birmingham Dart*, which opined that ‘*The Yorkshireman* suffers at present from the loss of Ant’s genius’. During his heyday, the ‘nom-de-crayon’ Ant became as ‘familiar in our mouths as household words’. As a comic artist, North was ‘near allied to genius’ and his chief assets included ‘a knowledge of Yorkshire character and types’, according to his obituarist.<sup>76</sup>

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72 *YM*, 3 December 1881.

73 Handwritten item in an album compiled by William Scruton, WYAS DB5/C42. For the involvement of W.P. Byles and the *Observer* in Liberal and Labour politics in late nineteenth century Bradford, see Keith Laybourn, ‘One of the Little Breezes Blowing Across Bradford’, in Keith Laybourn and David James (eds), *‘The Rising Sun of Socialism’: The Independent Labour Party in the Textile District of the West Riding of Yorkshire between 1890 and 1914* (West Yorkshire Archaeology Service, 1991), pp.1-27.

74 It was obliquely referred to as ‘Another Milestone’ in a *Yorkshireman* editorial on 8 September 1883.

75 *YM*, 5 April 1884. The article states that Arthur North was also co-proprietor and illustrator of a Newcastle paper, *The Northumbrian*, which was ‘struggling for existence’. It was published between December 1881 and November 1886.

76 ‘Passing of a Yorkshire cartoonist’, *Bradford Weekly Telegraph*, 28 February 1919.

Technically, North – who had begun his working life as a draughtsman for an engineering company – was not the most impressive of late Victorian cartoonists. But he had a distinctive style, invested his characters with warmth and was obviously a fast worker – an edition of *The Yorkshireman* might include 15 of his sketches. His economy of line is a refreshing contrast to some of the more accomplished but laboured illustrations in *The Yorkshireman* and contemporaneous periodicals. The fact that almost his entire career was spent within Yorkshire, recording and observing its social types, especially in an urban setting, means that North's work – principally in *The Yorkshireman*, *The Yorkshire Busy Bee* and *Toby*, but also as a book illustrator<sup>77</sup> – can be used in an appraisal of Yorkshire identities during the period. Henry Miller is generally justified when he states that the employment of London-based cartoonists weakens the extent to which illustrations in provincial periodicals are useful for historians researching local identity.<sup>78</sup> But North's work provides an exception.

James Burnley left an account of North's arrival at *The Yorkshireman* which reinforces the view that this was a cartoonist especially skilled at depicting Yorkshireness.

One Sunday morning in 1878, a youthful looking visitor called on me at my house in Whetley Mount, Manningham and made a proposal to introduce illustrations into *The Yorkshireman*, and offered me an article for which he had done some drawings. Both article and drawings took my fancy and we discussed ways and means. My visitor was Arthur North, and in a short time afterwards 'Ant's' illustrations became an attractive feature of the journal. 'Ant' was a genuine Yorkshire product, saw things from the Yorkshire point of view, and for *The Yorkshireman* was the very man for that time. He never threw off his original amateurishness of style, perhaps, but that was no drawback as far as *The Yorkshireman* was concerned. Content and happy in his local environment he never allowed himself to be tempted away from it.<sup>79</sup>



**Figure 3:** Arthur North's depiction of a woolstapler on holiday, *The Yorkshireman*, August 1878.

Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

<sup>77</sup> For example, he furnished copious small drawings to *Yorkshire Sketches* (Bradford: John Morgan. W.H.Clough, 1884), by William Cudworth, who contributed to *The Yorkshireman* under the nom-de-plume 'Rover'. North also produced watercolours of Bradford and a review of an exhibition in 1892 praised his local truthfulness. 'None of his water colour sketches are falsified, for the sake of artistic effect, by Italian skies or rustic greens that are utterly foreign to smoky Bradford' – William Scruton in *YM*, 15 November 1882.

<sup>78</sup> Miller, 'The Problem with Punch'. On 23 December 1882, *YM* carried a paragraph about the 'London artists who, with local assistance, have contributed to *The Yorkshireman* lately'. They included Warwick Reynolds and W.G. Baxter. *The Yorkshireman* included cartoons by an artist named H.G. Furniss, but this does not seem to have been Harry Furniss, one of the most famous *Punch* contributors.

<sup>79</sup> Burnley, *Literary Recollections*, p.28. Burnley does not refer to the contretemps between North and *The Yorkshireman*. And his account differs from statements in the articles of 1884 that North had begun at the magazine as a clerk





**Figure 4:** Arthur North depicts John Bull as a worker in the worsted trade, offered a 'pretty little treaty' by 'Pierre Froggie', in *The Yorkshireman*, May 1881.

Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.



**Figure 5:** Arthur North's cartoon of a collier who had forgotten to 'pawse' his wife, from *The Yorkshireman*, May 1885.

Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

The consensus of his contemporaries in West Riding journalism, then, was that North's drawings were distinctly of their region and they can therefore be examined for late Victorian Yorkshire 'types'.

An example from August 1878, is a stoutly built woolstapler, in a broad brimmed hat and garish checked trousers, wearing mutton chop whiskers [Figure 3]. His legs apart and his hands on his lapels in a self-satisfied manner, he attempts to do some business even while on holiday in what seems to be an east coast Yorkshire destination. This man is a John Bull figure in Yorkshire guise. Henry Miller found that representations of national symbols such as Britannia and John Bull were surprisingly absent from provincial comic papers and that local identities were often personified instead.<sup>80</sup> But sometimes a national symbol could be regionally expropriated. In May 1881, *The Yorkshireman* included a full-page cartoon by Arthur North, in which John Bull, named as such, was depicted as a Yorkshire wool textile worker – carrying a shuttle and wearing an apron and paper hat – refusing to be inveigled into signing 'A pretty little treaty' with 'Pierre Froggie' [Figure 4]. In one of his 'West Riding Sketches', James Burnley stated that the typical male inhabitant of his fictionalised town of Bington – based on Bingley – was 'the most perfect representative of *Punch's* John Bull that is now extant'.<sup>81</sup> In 1882 a *Yorkshireman* contributor signed 'J.F.' claimed John Bull for the county and in doing so set forth a

<sup>80</sup> Miller, 'The Problem with Punch'.

<sup>81</sup> James Burnley, *West Riding Sketches* (London: Hodder and Stoughton; Bradford, T.Brear, 1885), p.23.

number of supposed Yorkshire characteristics.

What a fine specimen of humanity [John Bull] is to be sure. Every inch of his rotund form bespeaks the man; a well-to-do, hearty, generous, impulsive fellow. As we look at him we lay claim to him as a Yorkshireman. His physiognomy, as portrayed by 'Punch', indicates all the essentials of a Yorkshireman. Amongst his many characteristics is modesty; he never assumes or presumes too much. He hates all mere pretension and sham. He is gentle as a lamb, until there is good reason for wrath; then woe be to the object or irritation. Otherwise, mighty is the sympathy which swells and rises in his huge bosom.<sup>82</sup>

Here is an example of the way that Yorkshireness could be seen as compatible with, indeed an epitome of a wider Englishness.<sup>83</sup>

Many of Arthur North's stand-alone cartoons featured dialect exchanges between working-class characters. When this is allied to aspects of dress and physiognomy, the particularly Yorkshire character that contemporaries detected in his work is fairly obvious. Darker aspects of working-class life and culture were sometimes the subject matter. A cartoon of January 1885 had a collier's son reminding his father that he had forgotten to 'pawse' (beat) his wife that morning [Figure 5]. Another cartoon from the same month had two lads explaining to their mother how they had made a game out of 'Bad Trade', which was endemic to the Bradford worsted industry at this time.

As an illustrator and a writer, Arthur North was a close observer of the manner in which space was shared by different classes in the newly redeveloped urban centres and commercial streets of the Victorian West Riding. In this he was typical of the observational journalists of the period. Gunn writes that

one effect of emptying the centre [of the city] of its inhabitants and recreating it as a monumental space was to throw into relief the identities of the different social groups that entered it. Who people were and how they were socially positioned became an issue of vital interest. In London as well as the industrial cities, the decades between the 1840s and 1880s saw an extraordinary attention to the minute detailing of matters such as dress, appearance and behaviour on the street.<sup>84</sup>

Among North's contributions to *The Yorkshireman* was a series of 'Yorkshire Street Sketches' which showed the different tiers of local society in close proximity. His Higher Briggate in Leeds was characterised by two fashionable women promenading in the company of a young dandy, while in Lower Briggate a fight had broken out between two bedraggled characters. In his own *Yorkshire Busy Bee*, North wrote and illustrated a thick description of Bond Street in Leeds which attempted to delineate bypassers with great exactness.<sup>85</sup> In July 1880 a march-past by soldiers and their band in Bradford drew a large and varied crowd which enabled James Burnley, as 'Saunterer', to describe social gradations among the city's closely mingled middle and working classes.

The crowd is a motley one and includes the main, if not the leading elements of Bradford social life. Mill-girls in Sunday attire puff and pant up the steep; shop-girls, with an air of condescension and

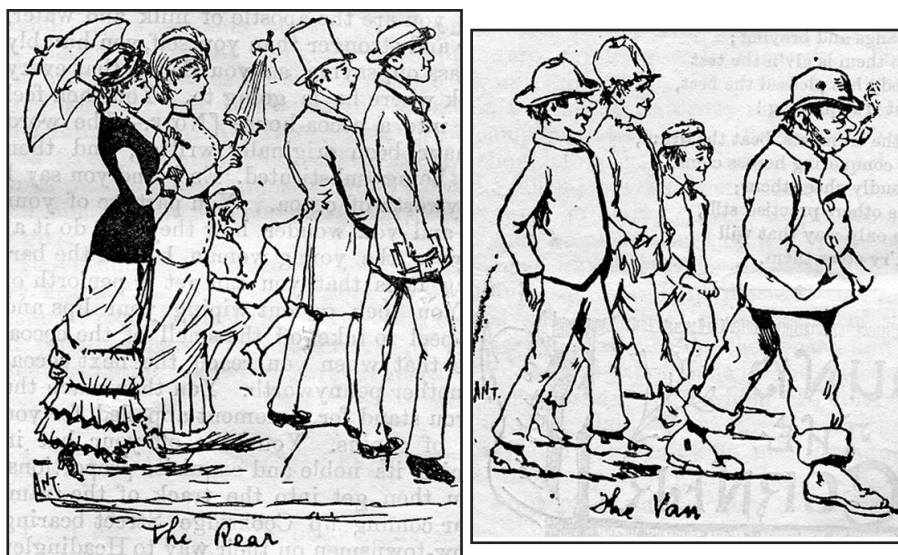
82 *YM*, 27 May 1882.

83 For an account of the evolution of John Bull and his availability to groups across the political spectrum in the nineteenth century, see Miles Taylor, 'John Bull and the Iconography of Public Opinion in England c.1712-1929', *Past and Present* No 134 (Feb, 1992), 93-128. By the last third of the century, John Bull had become neutral in political terms, according to Taylor, whose detailed study does not, however, include regional variations or appropriations. The still standard rotund image of John Bull was developed by *Punch* artists Leech and Tenniel and John Ruskin criticised the magazine for failing to depict this symbolic figure of the nation as a manufacturer (see Spielman, *History of Punch*, p.206). As shown, however, *The Yorkshireman* rectified this omission.

84 Gunn, *Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, p.60.

85 *The Yorkshire Busy Bee*, 27 August 1881.





**Figure 6:** Arthur North depicts the social strata at a Bradford gathering in July 1880, to accompany a text article in *The Yorkshireman*.  
Brotherton Library,  
University of Leeds.

superiority, follow leisurely on; pince-nez swells of the fifth water smoke their cheroots and expect every pretty girl that they encounter to be smitten with their distinguished appearance; Jack, Bill, Tom and Bob, members of one of the George Street gangs, are here, jostling and 'larking', short pipes in mouth; and hard-working 'toilers and moilers', with their children at their side, join the crowd of loiterers...<sup>86</sup>

Arthur North deftly illustrated the account with two sketches, interpolated into the text, showing 'The Van' – Burnley's 'George Street gang' – and 'The Rear' – shop girls and swells [Figure 6]. Such heterogeneous gatherings would not have been peculiar to Yorkshire, of course, but they do seem to belong to the kind of fluid industrial society in which new forms of social identity were under construction. The next section provides an analysis of two social identities which seemed to be particularly unsettling, leading to a virtual 'moral panic' in the context of an industrialised Yorkshire that remained unsure of its destiny.

#### 4. The Giddy Masher and the Factory Girl

COMIC papers such as *The Yorkshireman* were pre-occupied with the ways in which people could, on the surface at least, transform themselves, thus sending out confused signals about class and regional identity. The periodicals had a particular fixation on the phenomenon of young men who dressed ostentatiously and affected upper-class modes of speech and behaviour and who paraded the streets and parks and infested the theatres. The commonest term for such men was 'masher'<sup>87</sup> and they were the source of continual satire and humour.<sup>88</sup> Sometimes the masher was deemed to be an impoverished young man – a 'bounder' or 'counter jumper' – who devoted all his meagre resources to fashionable

<sup>86</sup> *YM*, 31 July 1880.

<sup>87</sup> 'A fop of affected manners and "loud" style of dress who frequented music halls etc and posed as a lady killer' – *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. First recorded use 1882.

<sup>88</sup> Peter Bailey has explored the masher and the 'swell' as a phenomenon of the music hall stage in Chapter 5 of his *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). It is not fully clear, however, whether the stage swells and mashers were an exaggerated satire of an observable social phenomenon – as seems most likely – or a theatrical creation subsequently imitated away from the stage. Whatever the truth, there does seem to have a symbiosis between stage and street.

clothes in an attempt to transcend or disguise his origins. Such figures were the butt of satire in periodicals around the country and in the analysis of Simon Gunn this theme was a product of class anxiety.<sup>89</sup> I would add that in urban Yorkshire, the continual lambasting of the ‘mashers’ acquired a layer of anxiety derived from a perceived threat to regional identity and economic prosperity.

A satirical poem from an edition of *The Yorkshireman* in 1891 was entitled ‘The Giddy Masher’:

*My father has the business head, dear boys,  
And piles the money high.  
And I'm the boy to scatter it  
And make the shiners fly.<sup>90</sup>*

This genus of masher or swell had a particular resonance in the industrial districts of the West Riding. The ‘Wiener thesis’ that British industry was undermined by a process of ‘gentrification’ of the heirs to industrial enterprise might be contestable.<sup>91</sup> but it can be shown that in the West Riding of the 1870s-90s there was an anxious perception that hard-earned fortunes were being frittered away. In 1878, an article entitled ‘Public Life in Leeds’ described idlers who drifted from bar to bar, including ‘a party of apparently foolish and certainly idle young men’.

They are wealthy but have not made the money themselves, for they do not seem to possess either the energy or ability necessary even for a junior clerkship. No, their fathers made the money – commencing with the proverbial shilling, toiling on for years at a weekly wage, the amount of which these young gents will spend at one swoop in a bottle of champagne...<sup>92</sup>

In 1882 a new series entitled ‘Saturday Sermons’, written by an acerbic pseudo-cleric named Friar Dominic – the nom-de-plume of a contributor whom James Burnley named as ‘Mr Turner, of Oddie, Turner & co’<sup>93</sup> – chose as its first target ‘the golden youth who have inherited their father’s money and are bent on reducing it to a similar quantity to their brains. The town abounds with these, fathered by Mammon and mothered in Pride, galloping on the backs of drink and lust headlong to the devil’.<sup>94</sup> An analysis of ‘Manningham Mashers’ in 1883 dealt with several varieties of the phenomenon but particularly with

young Cheek, the tall youth with the pince nez glasses and the lofty bearing...He does no particular work just now. Assists ‘Pa’ a little, perhaps. Cheek can afford to despise everybody. On a fine morning he strolls down into the town and eyes all the girls over... If he meets any of his father’s employees he never thinks of making the poor things uncomfortable by speaking to them...He can, of course, go everywhere by virtue of his position, which is, as you know, superior. He may be ever so rude, or ignorant but Manningham Society receives him by the hand, for he is the son of his ‘Pa’ and was at the Grammar School.<sup>95</sup>

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89 Gunn, *Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, pp. 67-69.

90 YM, 18 February 1891.

91 M.J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For a concise rebuttal, see Peter Mandler, ‘Against “Englishness”: English Culture and the Limits to Rural Nostalgia, 1850-1940’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, Vol. 7, (1997), 155-175. See also W.D Rubinstein, *Capitalism, culture, and decline in Britain, 1750-1990* (London: Routledge, 1993); F.M.L. Thompson, *Gentrification and the Enterprise Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.155.

92 YM, 24 August 1878.

93 Burnley, *Literary Recollections*, p.25.

94 YM, 8 April 1882.

95 YM, 13 January 1883.

In 1885 a regular feature headed ‘The Pillory’ developed a proto-gentrification theory. It began by praising the self-made men who abounded in the West Riding,<sup>96</sup> who ‘give us vigour and manliness, plain-speaking and hard thinking’, in contrast to ‘the namby-pamby people who claim to possess birth and breeding’. However...

the self-made man is so blind in one particular subject that he often is the means of adding largely to the class for which he feels so much contempt. Remembering his own early struggles and privations, he says to the wife of his bosom, ‘We will take care that our children shall be brought up differently from ourselves; they shall not know what it is to fight and struggle for existence; whatever money can do to make them of superior mould that money shall do’.<sup>97</sup>

In 1889, the playwright and regular periodical contributor Fred W. Broughton began a serial entitled ‘Plain and Coloured’, revolving around the family of a self-made worsted spinner, Ezra Bumworth. His children were born at different stages in Ezra’s rise to wealth. His eldest son, John, had no affectations and worked in the business. His daughter Augusta Marianne, however was a snob and the youngest son, named Horace Latimer de Dutton Bumworth, was ‘the gentleman of the family’ and would not be expected to play any role in commerce.<sup>98</sup> George Sheeran has shown that this conventionalised picture of gentrified sons of West Riding manufacturers spurning the family enterprise does not bear quantitative scrutiny,<sup>99</sup> but as a caricature it was common in the regional periodicals.

The special relevance to this thesis is that these wastrels – whether real and imagined – were educated not only out of their class but their regional identity too, by shedding Yorkshire speech patterns, and this was one of the main points of satire against them. In *Toby the Yorkshire Tyke*, the writer ‘Truthful James’, alias James W. Richards,<sup>100</sup> described the ‘Commercial Street crawlers’ of Leeds:

To join them I would use the word ‘so’ frequently, as, for instance, ‘so jolly you know’, and ‘so glad’ and I would call a ‘club’ a ‘clab’ and the letter ‘r’ I would turn into an ‘h’ whenever the former terminated a word. Thus I would say ‘deah’ and ‘heah’.<sup>101</sup>

A later edition relayed the speech pattern of a young man at the Leeds Grand Theatre.

‘What a beastly noosance it was, we ‘ad hactually a twenty minutes’ hinterval between heach of the hacts,’ I heard a very elegant young man say to a friend just outside a *Yorkshire* [italics orig] theatre the other evening. How’s this for superfine? Our prize elocutionists aren’t in it.<sup>102</sup>

In 1895, *The Yorkshireman* devised an ‘Examination paper for candidates seeking election to the Fellowship and Society of Leeds Swells’:

Q – What is your name?

A – Percy Plantagenet De Vere Jobson

Q – What is your father’s name?

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96 For an analysis of the self-made man in Bradford in the first half of the nineteenth century, and the cultural and religious factors which contributed to the phenomenon, see Theodore Koditschek, *Class Formation and Urban Industrial Society: Bradford 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.182-207. Koditschek demonstrates that ‘self-made’ men generally needed the backing of existing family resources but also that in his period the sons tended to outstrip their fathers in enterprise. This is the obverse of the perception that would become widespread from the 1880s.

97 *YM*, 23 May 1885.

98 *YM*, 8 September 1889. Sadly, Broughton’s serial, which promised to yield much satire on aspects of Victorian Yorkshire identities, seems to have petered out after just one instalment.

99 George Sheeran, *Brass Castles* (Stroud: Tempus, 2006).

100 A *Yorkshireman* contributor before editing its rival *Toby, the Yorkshire Tyke* and then moving to London to become fiction editor for the Harmsworth company – Burnley, *Literary Recollections*, pp.23-24.

101 *Toby, the Yorkshire Tyke*, 24 November 1883.

102 *Ibid.*, 16 February 1884.



A – Jabez Jobson, commonly known as Jabe Jobson  
 Q – What trade or profession does your father follow?  
 A – None. He is a gentleman.  
 Q – What was he in early life?  
 A – A weaver.<sup>103</sup>

Underlying this strand of satire there was a fear that the economic future of industrialised Yorkshire would be undermined; and that an authentic Yorkshire identity was being lost among the middle classes.

It can be asked whether the ‘mashers’ who allegedly prowled the streets and infested the theatres and bars of industrial Yorkshire in the later nineteenth century provide anecdotal support for the gentrification theory. I have shown that there was widespread journalistic concern that these young men were being educated to lead unproductive lives and felt an entitlement to live as gentlemen of leisure. On the other hand, they seem to have been essentially an urban phenomenon – there are few references to them pining for country houses and rural pursuits. Therefore they act against the concept of rural, gentrified Englishness, which was supposedly the undoing of industrial enterprise. Nevertheless, they can be taken to represent an urban West Riding variant of gentrification and evidence that there were at least perceptions that this process was under way. There is some evidence that the younger generations of the wealthier Yorkshire industrialists did conform to the gentrification pattern. They might not have fallen into dissipation and idleness, but after a public school and Oxbridge education they often entered the professions or the army. Meanwhile, several of the most successful manufacturers purchased country estates, often away from the West Riding or indeed the county.<sup>104</sup>

The self-made man – however effete his offspring – was generally accorded respect as a quintessential product of the West Riding. But he too could be subject to satire. *The Yorkshireman* published some of the earliest writings of Robert Blatchford, the future socialist writer and founder of the *Clarion* newspaper and movement who was raised in Halifax.<sup>105</sup> His series entitled ‘Yorkshire Sketches’ included a portrait of ‘The Self-Made Man’ [Figure 7] which is almost a template for the humorous stereotype of wealthy Yorkshiremen boasting about their humble origins.

I warn’t born wi’ a silver spoon i’ mi math. When I wor a lad I solded blacknin i’ Bradford Market. I’m noan ashamed on it; I’m praad on it. I’d nooa parents to advise me, an’ I nivver hed a day’s schooilin’; but I wor determined to git on. All th’ knowledge I know I learned mesen, an’ al t’ money I hev I addled mesen; an’ look at me naah. There’s monny a swell abaht ‘ere as thinks hissen summat extra



**Figure 7:** Montague Blatchford's depiction of a Yorkshire self-made man, for his brother Robert's article in *The Yorkshireman*, November 1882. Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

103 *YM*, 26 January 1894.

104 See Jowitt, ‘The Retardation of Trade Unionism’, p.96. The Fosters of Black Dyke Mills bought Hornby Castle in Lancashire; Francis Crossley, of the Halifax carpet making dynasty purchased the Somerleyton estate in Norfolk, talking the title Lord Somerleyton; Samuel Cunliffe Lister, of Manningham Mills, bought two North Yorkshire estates and took the title Lord Masham.

105 ‘I wrote a story for a paper called *The Yorkshireman* for which I was paid half a guinea, I wrote another, for which the paper forgot to pay me at all,’ wrote Blatchford in his autobiographical *My Eighty Years* (London: Cassell, 1931), p.169.



wi' 'is fine schooilin' an' stuck-up airs an' graces, as I could buy an' sell today...<sup>106</sup>

Blatchford's pieces were illustrated by his polymath brother Montague, who eventually became a significant figure in early Labour politics in Halifax and wrote as 'Mont Blong' in the *Clarion*.<sup>107</sup> Having started as a carpet designer, in the late 1870s Montague became a successful artist for *Punch* and relocated to London temporarily.<sup>108</sup> His stand-alone cartoons for *The Yorkshireman* had an explicit West Riding backdrop – plainly inspired by his Halifax upbringing – and, as with the contributions of Arthur North, they helped to provide a visual reinforcement of Yorkshire identity [Figure 8].

A stock figure almost as common as that of the 'masher' and the wastrel manufacturer's son, was that of the Yorkshire factory girl whose employment had given her a measure of economic and social independence which she used to effect a personal transformation that was often found to be disturbing. In an 1875 series entitled 'Portraits in Black and White', Astin Vickers wrote:

To be a weaver is the greatest ambition, next to the ambition of being made a wife, of the Bradford working girl... It is such an independent occupation. There are masters, overlookers, takers-in and such-like personages hovering about the weaver, in superior positions, but she cares very little for them...<sup>109</sup>

One of Arthur North's earliest contributions to *The Yorkshireman* depicted a factory worker at 6.30 am, wearing shawl and clogs and carrying her lunch pail, and at 6.30pm in a fashionable dress, wearing a feathered hat, carrying a parasol, behaving coquettishly [Figure 9]. Some of the satire directed at female factory workers mixed misogyny with moral panic and class consciousness. A poem entitled 'The Factory Flirt' charted the transformation of a mill girl 'with her unkempt hair and her boldest stare' into one who later, having thrown off 'the scent of the mill', emerges from home in her gayest dress 'on Manningham Lane to roam'.



**Figure 8:** Industrial West Riding backdrop for a Montague Blatchford cartoon in *The Yorkshireman*, December 1882. Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

<sup>106</sup> R. Blatchford, 'Yorkshire Sketches IV', *YM*, 25 November 1882.

<sup>107</sup> See Patricia A. Dawson, 'The Halifax Independent Labour Movement: Labour and Liberalism 1890-1914' in Laybourn and James (eds), *The Rising Sun of Socialism*, pp. 45-75. Paul Ward, *Red Flag and Union Jack* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, Royal Historical Society, 1998), *passim* for Robert Blatchford and the *Clarion*; p.35 for an example of Montague Blatchford's political journalism.

<sup>108</sup> M.H. Spielman, *The History of Mr Punch* (London: Cassell, 1895), p.548.

<sup>109</sup> *YM*, August 1875.

**Figure 9:** Arthur North's depiction of 'The Factory Worker' in *The Yorkshireman*, July 1878. Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.



*The Factory Flirt is a being grand,  
When the lights are rather dim,  
When the din of the street can spare the treat  
Of her dialect odd and grim;  
'Tis then you mistake her for what she thinks  
She rather successfully apes,  
For then you're in doubt as to who is about  
And cannot discern true shapes.<sup>110</sup>*

A series entitled 'Practical Parodies' included a poem called 'Factory Mally', which described a foul-mouthed and presumably promiscuous mill girl.

*Of all the girls without a heart  
There's none beats factory Mally,  
The foul reverse of all things smart  
She lives in Bradford valley.<sup>111</sup>*

This was a close parody of the famous 'Sally in Our Alley', written by the Yorkshire-born Henry Carey (1687-1743). But whereas the original song was notable for painting a sympathetic picture of a girl from an impoverished background, its post-industrial counterpart took a much more jaded view.

Evidence of misogyny in the Yorkshire periodicals leads to a wider discussion of gender issues. Was *The Yorkshireman* written and published exclusively for Yorkshire men? In the context of a patriarchal society, the title was probably not intended to carry any particular gender connotation – 'Yorkshireman' would and could have stood for 'Yorkshire person'. As we have seen, stock characters in its satire included factory girls, but socially pretentious lower-middle-class women were sometimes mocked. In the late 1880s, there were regular stories featuring the fictional Geronimus Smith and his wife Araminta of Pudsey. They were inverted Pooters, in that Geronimus stuck fast to his Yorkshire dialect and down-to-earth, democratic manners, whereas Araminta affected Standard English and was a member of the Primrose League.

110 Verses two and three, 'The Factory Flirt', *YM*, 5 April 1884.

111 Verse one, 'Factory Mally', *YM*, 11 July 1885.



Generally, it seems plain that the content of *The Yorkshireman* was aimed at a male readership, even without taking its sports coverage into account. A regular theme of its observational and investigative journalism was the prevalence of prostitution in West Riding towns. This would be written about in shocked tones. But there was often more than a hint of prurience as well.<sup>112</sup>

Illustrations in *The Yorkshireman* might sometimes, in the context of the period, have been mildly titillating. Few opportunities were passed to depict pantomime actresses in tights and there were various series of illustrations depicting idealised females, with titles such as ‘Girls of the Day’. A series depicting ‘Yorkshire Belles’ included ‘The Belle of Apperley’, ‘The Roundhay Belle’ and ‘The Belle of Wilsden’, although

no obvious local distinctions can be detected. A series in 1890 entitled ‘Coming People’, perhaps prompted by the rise of the ‘New Woman’, depicted and mocked women attired for male occupations, such as the Lady Coachman, the Lady Barrister and the Lady Cricketer. Anxiety about ‘mannish’ women was a feature of periodicals of the 1890s, although the response in *The Yorkshireman* was patronising and whimsical rather than the alarmism detected more generally by Fraser, Green and Johnston.<sup>113</sup> Female fashions were depicted with some care by the magazine’s artists – especially, perhaps, when they emphasised curvaceousness – but when fashion was written about in the editorial columns it was almost exclusively in terms of the implications it might have for the fortunes of the textile trade. A full-page cartoon in September 1881 depicted a farmer and a Bradford manufacturer, against a backdrop of smoking mill chimneys, gazing in bemusement at a woman dressed in French fashion. In a Yorkshire industrial context she seems an alien and disquieting presence, not least because she is clad in French-made fabrics [Figure 10].<sup>114</sup> *The Yorkshireman*, which had just two named female contributors – the poets Elsie Lush and Annie Clough – was largely written by and for men, which was not unusual. ‘Masculine’ magazines of this period would deal with ‘broad public issues, high culture or social satire’, while the ‘feminine’ magazines would deal primarily with household



**Figure 10:** Trade anxieties. Cartoon by H.Furniss in *The Yorkshireman*, September 1881.

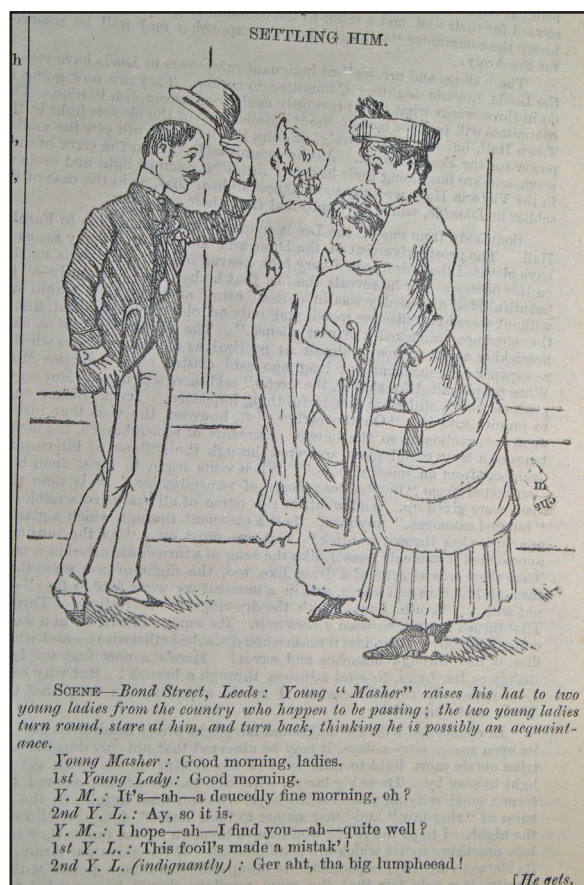
*Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.*

<sup>112</sup> For example, an article entitled ‘The Shady Side of Leeds’ by ‘Little John’ – *YM*, 6 July 1881. Gunn found that a mix of censoriousness and prurience towards prostitutes was widespread in the provincial periodical press, as well as hostility towards groups such as Jews, ‘revealing a visceral antipathy to those perceived as alien and threatening’ – Gunn, *Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, p.6.

<sup>113</sup> Hilary Fraser, Stephanie Green and Judith Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.8.

<sup>114</sup> For the economic plight of the Bradford woollen and worsted industry facing foreign competition, see Laybourn, ‘One of the Little Breezes Blowing Across Bradford’.

matters, popular culture and fashion.<sup>115</sup> *The Yorkshireman* and comparable publications covered popular culture – theatre, sport and music hall – but otherwise they matched the ‘masculine’ criteria listed above. The broader question is whether or not women were admitted to the sense of regional identity propagated by *The Yorkshireman* and other publications. We have seen how a departure from speaking in a Yorkshire manner and aping southern or Metropolitan manners was sometimes seen as effeminate, suggesting a correlation between Yorkshireness and manliness. But working-class women, although sometimes depicted negatively, as with the stereotype of the impertinent factory girl, were often the repositories of dialect speech and lack of social pretension and these were valued regional characteristics. In an 1883 cartoon by Arthur North, the gallantries of a ‘masher’ are met with ‘Ger aht, that big lumphead!’ [Figure 11].



**Figure 11:** Young women deal with a ‘masher’ in an Arthur North cartoon in *The Yorkshireman*, September 1883.

Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

## 5. ‘A Cockney’s impressions of Yorkshire’: self-satire and self-esteem

In January 1885, *The Yorkshireman* marked its tenth anniversary with a triumphalist poem.

*Ten years ago none of its kind  
In Yorkshire was existing,  
But when success our efforts crowned  
There was a grand enlisting  
Of imitators vague and wild  
Who sought our undermining,  
But most of them have come and gone,  
In feebleness declining.*<sup>116</sup>

During the remaining 14 years of its existence the periodical underwent various changes of ownership and location. By 1887 it was published by The Yorkshireman Newspaper Group Ltd, Kirkgate, Bradford. In January 1888 it was announced that the editorial offices would be transferred from Bradford to Leeds. James Burnley had relocated to London by 1885 but in January 1890 a front page announcement by ‘Saunterer’ revealed that he was ‘resuming the editorship of my old paper’ and that ‘most of the contributors and artists

<sup>115</sup> Fraser, Green and Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*, p.198.

<sup>116</sup> YM, 3 January 1885. The magazine had, for example, seen off *The Yorkshire Busy Bee* and *Toby, the Yorkshire Tyke* would not survive the year.



who co-operated to win success for it in the old days will continue to use their pens and pencils on its behalf...'<sup>117</sup> It is not clear whether Burnley moved back to Yorkshire as a hands-on editor – the 1891 census shows him, his wife and three daughters living in Highgate Road, St Pancras – but the name 'Saunterer' was prominently displayed beneath the masthead, and was clearly regarded as a selling-point. By November, however, it had ceased to appear, suggesting that the arrangement had been terminated. By 1893 the entire *Yorkshireman* operation was concentrated in Bradford once more and in November of that year the publisher was stated to be Herbert North, the younger brother of Arthur. He continued in that role until the demise of the periodical in 1899. The proprietors were variously given as the Ebor Publishing Company and Albion Publishers Ltd, but by October 1898, the magazine had moved to Cloth Hall Street, Huddersfield. For much of its existence *The Yorkshireman* had carried little Huddersfield material, but in its declining months much of its advertising and many of its news items emanated from that town, suggesting that Herbert North – living in Huddersfield and working as a journalist in 1901 – had tried to eke out the magazine's life by reinventing it as a Huddersfield paper, while still proclaiming its county-wide identity.

It must be assumed that by this time sales were low. But they achieved moderately impressive levels at various points in the magazine's existence. Reliable circulation figures for Victorian periodicals are 'frequently immune to the probings of even the most diligent researcher', according to Joel H. Wiener.<sup>118</sup> There was no Audit Bureau of Circulation until the 1930s and earlier claims made for circulation in advertisements or Press directories were often boastful and groundless. Occasionally, however, plausible figures can be gleaned. For example, in 1884, the *Bradford Illustrated Weekly Telegraph* reported that in an American Press directory *The Yorkshireman* had claimed a sale of 18,000 copies a month and it did not 'feel inclined to question the accuracy of this estimate'.<sup>119</sup> The *Yorkshireman* responded with a claim that the figure was, in fact, 18,000 a week.<sup>120</sup> During his period of estrangement from *The Yorkshireman*, Arthur North wrote that in its early days the periodical sold 3-4,000 copies a week. This rapidly rose to 10,000 (North implying that his artwork was responsible) and during a general election campaign, sales touched 28,000 a week before settling back to 15,000. They then fell to 9,000 before climbing back to 11,000.<sup>121</sup> Circulation, therefore, fluctuated considerably, but might have averaged around the 10,000 mark for much of the magazine's existence. Sales would mostly have been in the West Riding urban centres that were the focus of *The Yorkshireman's* coverage and comment, but the magazine did try to widen its geographical base. Its attempts and failures to do so illustrate the difficulty of constructing and propagating a pan-Yorkshire identity.

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117 *YM*, 8 January 1890.

118 Joel H. Wiener, 'Circulation and the Stamp Tax' in J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. Van Arsdell (eds), *Victorian Periodicals, a Guide to Research* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1978), p.151.

119 *Bradford Illustrated Weekly Telegraph*, 6 September 1884.

120 *YM*, 13 September 1884.

121 Arthur North, 'Concerning comic papers and the people who work them', *Toby, the Yorkshire Tyke*, 29 March 1884.

When he resumed the editorship in 1890, James Burnley pledged to make the publication ‘thoroughly representative of the county’.<sup>122</sup> Over the years, *The Yorkshireman* made several attempts to broaden its coverage. For most of the magazine’s existence a column called ‘Halifax Beacon Sparks’ commented on social and political events in that town. Regular coverage of other urban centres was less sustained. In September 1881 a column entitled ‘Sheffield Notes’ made its debut. But it did not survive the year and subsequent coverage of Sheffield was sparse and often hostile, evidence of the antagonism that could exist between West Riding urban centres with their differing traditions of trade and politics. The final months of 1883 saw the most concerted attempt at pan-Yorkshire coverage, with the appearance of columns given rather arch names such as ‘Malton Musings’, ‘Ilkley Items’, ‘Skipton Skits’, ‘York Yarns’, ‘Keighley Kernels’ and ‘Hull Hits’. Some centres, such as the emergent Middlesbrough were virtually ignored, which lends inverse support to an analysis that the latter town lacked a sense of Yorkshire identity. These columns were mostly short-lived, perhaps because of the difficulty of attracting dependable correspondents or because sales figures in the respective areas did not warrant the effort.

York, however, was given fairly consistent coverage and the city’s treatment provides an interesting case study in the variegated nature of Yorkshire identity. Occasionally it would be referred to as Yorkshire’s ‘capital city’, although the claims of Leeds to inherit this mantle would be debated, usually in whimsical terms, as in a response to the claim made in 1882 by Leeds Conservative MP William Jackson that his city was now the county’s capital.

If the Five Lions of York could but have heard this remark, it would have made their tails curl with indignation. Leeds the capital of Yorkshire! First, Leeds claimed to be the capital of the West Riding, making thereby the Wakefield people turn blue with jealousy. Now, it seems to be going a step further, and is claiming the first place in the whole county. Of course Leeds relies on its ‘brass’, as money is thereabouts colloquially called, and York on its prestige, antiquity and undoubted right of possession. Leeds got the West Riding Assizes from York; when it gets the Minster away, then will be the time for York to fold its hands, lay itself down, and die out as the ancient capital of our broad shire, but not before.<sup>123</sup>

Despite this mock indignation, York would be referred to as ‘the city of churches’, or a ‘sleepy-headed city’, as if it were a Yorkshire equivalent of Rodenbach’s ‘Bruges La Mort’. In 1887 it was commented that ‘York is sleeping once more... in the old rut again, jogging along as at the same familiar trot. But for its big station, I verily believe that the ancient city would long since have crumbled with its walls’.<sup>124</sup> Whilst acknowledged as the historical heart of Yorkshire, York was seen as somewhere apart and often mystifying:

A West Riding Yorkshirewoman, on her first visit to the ancient capital of the county, was so bewildered by the sight of the grey timeworn battlements that when asked whither the train from which she had just alighted was bound, she could only gasp – ‘To Yorksher, ah believe’.<sup>125</sup>

For the contributors and readers of *The Yorkshireman*, their favoured definition of the county was the modern, industrialised West Riding. The fact that York was itself a centre of industry was generally overlooked. It is therefore ironic that after Seebohm Rowntree’s

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122 *YM*, 8 January 1890.

123 *YM*, 26 August 1882.

124 *YM*, 14 April 1887.

125 *YM*, 4 October 1884.

first survey of poverty in the city (published in 1901 as *Poverty: a Study of Town Life*), data from York would provide the basis for urban sociological and historical analysis for several decades. Rural Yorkshire was often viewed with patronising disdain, as being backward economically, politically and socially. An exception was made for the quasi-rural communities that were a characteristic part of the West Riding. An article in the series ‘Glimpses of Leeds’ described a bar parlour where

we can see broad and bulky clothiers, whose red and jovial faces testify to the healthiness of the breezy hills on which their villages stand. Their talk is of wool and pieces, and scribblers and looms; but they smell strongly of the country. Not the country though of the timid and awkward rustic, but the picturesque and unrivalled rural expanse bounded by Leeds, Bradford, Halifax Huddersfield and Wakefield, which has produced generations of healthy, shrewd, and money making men, who have created for Yorkshire its enviable reputation.<sup>126</sup>

*The Yorkshireman* was, for most of its existence, published in Bradford, often known as ‘Worstedopolis’. It is not possible to know what proportion of readers were directly involved in the woollen and worsted trades, but these occupations provided a fund of symbols and metaphors that found their way into articles and poems, whether it was an ailing weaver crying out, at the point of death that ‘t’warp’s fell’d aht’;<sup>127</sup> or Fred Broughton in a rhyming ‘London Letter’:

*I’m gratified to meet again  
My well-loved fellow Yorkshiremen.  
What though it be my lot to race  
For bread and cheese midst London toil,  
My thoughts oft seek the good old place  
Or warp and weft and top and noil.*<sup>128</sup>

‘Shoddy’ was a form of cheap cloth produced with yarn made from shredded rags, supposed to have been devised by a Batley manufacturer. By the early 1860s, its metaphorical use to describe something second-rate or artificial masquerading as the genuine article was well established on both sides of the Atlantic. But it retained its association with Yorkshire.<sup>129</sup> *The Yorkshireman* made frequent references to the ‘shoddyocracy’ and often deployed ‘shoddy’ as a metaphor, for example in an elaborate satirical poem which lampooned social climbing women, hypocritical churchgoers, down-at-heel aristocrats keeping up appearances and foolish clergymen.

*They’re not ‘all-wool’, but lack in strength and body;  
They might pass in a crowd, but in truth to be avowed,  
They’re made of what we Yorkshire folk call ‘shoddy’.*<sup>130</sup>

Underlying such satire was the acknowledgment that although Yorkshire had the terminology and insight to identify such sham people, the county was also capable of producing them in the first place. *The Yorkshireman* and its contributors were sometimes self-congratulatory about the county, but also satirised many aspects of the region and its

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126 ‘Glimpses of Leeds’ by The Man About, *YM*, 29 April 1882.

127 ‘Dialect Ditties’, *YM*, 10 November 1887.

128 *YM*, 21 April 1887.

129 In 1876, a play entitled *Shoddy: A Yorkshire Tale of Home*, by Arthur Wood, was given its first production, at the Old Theatre Royal Bristol. It revolved around the troubles of a self-made Yorkshire shoddy manufacturer whose family was deceived by a sham baronet but rescued from poverty by a wealthy man pretending to be a factory hand.

130 ‘Shoddy’, *YM*, 28 April 1887.

people. A common method was to devise a fictional visitor to Yorkshire and record his or her impressions. This had a dual purpose – it could mock the affectations and prejudices of, say, a Londoner visiting Yorkshire, but also, with faux objectivity, criticise various aspects of the county's people and culture. This tells us something about the complexity of Yorkshire identities during the period in question.

The first use of this device was the 1877 series entitled 'A Cockney's Impressions of Yorkshire'. It expresses resentment of the assumed superiority of Londoners and of the stereotypical view of Yorkshire people in general, but as the 'Cockney' gives his impressions of Yorkshire we learn a great deal of how, in fact, a later Victorian Yorkshireman saw his county. Bradford was deemed to display much greater levels of artistic taste than Leeds, where 'the people pretend to patronise art but have, as a rule, no art tastes whatever'.<sup>131</sup> Sheffield was 'perhaps the dirtiest, smokiest and the ugliest town in the kingdom, and it lies amidst scenery which can hardly be surpassed in the whole country'. In the old market towns of the North and East Ridings 'the people do not seem to live – they vegetate'. York is 'quaint and drowsy'. There was a general regret that 'industry brings so much that is unlovely in its train' although the potential for making money meant that 'residence [in West Riding towns] could easily be made tolerable'.<sup>132</sup> I have already indicated that the 'Cockney' series was almost certainly written by James Burnley, who, despite his regional patriotism, was always prepared to puncture Yorkshire pretensions, as this passage in his *West Riding Sketches* demonstrates:

I venture... to designate the patriotic Yorkshireman, with his stalwart form and beaming face, as the most birth-proud member of the human race. Whether the Yorkshireman is justified in this high self-appraisal or not is another thing. Certainly he has for a long time been credited with the possession of a greater amount of shrewdness and cunning than his fellow-countrymen, but this has been due, I imagine, more to the falsifications of drama and of fiction than to anything else; for much as I have seen of Yorkshire wariness and Yorkshire caution, I have not found the denizens of Middlesex or Lancashire behindhand in these matters.<sup>133</sup>

*The Yorkshireman* would carry several variants on the device of a fictionalised visitor to Yorkshire. One of the most elaborate was a series entitled 'Letters from Ancient Yorkshire', purporting to be extracted from the 'Timbuctoo Telegraph' of 2882. It depicted a party of African travellers exploring a primitivised Yorkshire. The series was humorous but made telling points about the impact of industrialisation on the environment and its coarsening effect on people. When one of the sophisticated African visitors is called a 'black-lucking divil' by a hut-dwelling Yorkshireman, there is a digression on 'the language used by this degenerate son of a great people'.

A thousand years ago there was no part of England where the language of England was spoken with greater purity, or with greater correctness than in Yorkshire. We have fine examples of the oratory of ancient Yorkshire in those volumes in the public libraries of our own dear Timbuctoo which contain all that has come down to posterity of the great orations of Nicholson, Scarr, Cutler, North and Binns, the leading members of the Senate of Leeds about one thousand years ago. Those chaste and elegant examples of pure English now form the text books of the language in the Imperial University of Timbuctoo. How different the language of this modern scion of the race!<sup>134</sup>

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131 For the cultural and other rivalries between Bradford and Leeds, the classic account is that by Briggs, in *Victorian Cities*, pp. 139-183

132 'A Cockney's Impressions of Yorkshire: Part II', *YM*, 24 February 1877.

133 Burnley, *West Riding Sketches*, p.9.

134 'Letters from Ancient Yorkshire', *YM*, 23 December 1882.



The names listed were those of prominent Leeds councillors of the 1880s. The satirical implication is that they mangled rather than adorned the English language.

‘Letters from Ancient Yorkshire’ were a light-hearted example of the ‘reverse imperialism’ or ‘inward colonialism’ that was a trope of fin-de-siècle British fiction.<sup>135</sup> *The Yorkshireman* made very little acknowledgment of actual imperialism. It carried travelogues of overseas journeys made by contributors – such as a description by ‘A Special Correspondent’ of a trip to Egypt in 1881 – and there were very occasional cartoons that displayed conventional imperialistic attitudes. But when foreign affairs were mentioned they were generally concerned with trade matters, such as competition from France or tariffs imposed by the USA. *The Yorkshireman*, away from the political centre and the sway of the ‘Imperial Parliament’, could be used as supporting evidence for the theory that the British people were in general little concerned with imperial matters.<sup>136</sup>

Further examples of the device of an invented visitor to Yorkshire being used for the purposes of self-satire included a *Yorkshireman* series of 1883 in which a snobbish, naïve young Londoner visited relatives in Yorkshire and wrote home about his new surroundings.

The Manningham people, though professedly the elite of the town, do not seem to me to have those qualities of superiority which distinguish the better classes in London. There is too great an aptitude amongst them to talk loudly of the numerical extent of their riches; too violent a propensity to exhibit their self-sense of social pre-eminence over those whose incomes may not be as large as their own.<sup>137</sup>

In 1885, a series entitled ‘The Sights of Leeds’ was purportedly written by a London author named Tom Slater, cast in the role of Faust, being shown around Leeds by one Dick Thompson, depicted as Mephistopheles. The format allowed for familiar satire of London attitudes to Yorkshire. ‘I am bound for an unknown land. Yorkshire is to me pretty much what Siberia must be to the average St Petersburg masher. The Londoner (like the Parisian) believes his city to be the whole world’.<sup>138</sup> The device was also another opportunity for Yorkshire self-examination, including an almost Swiftian depiction of a banquet in Leeds:

The majority of the company, like the host, appeared to be of the self-made order of architecture, and most certainly they had made themselves very badly. Loud-voiced, vulgar men, and fat over-dressed women were ramming food into their mouths, in most cases with their knives.... ‘Who *are* all these vulgar people?’ I asked. ‘Some of the richest and most influential men in Leeds,’ replied my Mentor.<sup>139</sup>

The young man’s host later showed off his art collection:

‘I picked this one [Venus rising from the sea] up cheap because these naked young women are at a discount in t’picture market. You see women fowks don’t like ‘em, and they’ve gone down in price. I buy all my pictures on a business principle, same as I buy other stuff.’<sup>140</sup>

The alleged philistinism of Victorian Yorkshire’s middle classes was something that repeatedly troubled the county’s periodicals. Music appreciation, in particular, caused a good deal of soul-searching. On the one hand, musicality was widely regarded as an innate

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135 S.D. Arata, ‘The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonisation’ *Victorian Studies* (Summer, 1990), 621-645. J.Wilt, ‘The Imperial Mouth: Imperialism, the Gothic and Science Fiction’, *Journal of Popular Culture* 14 (Spring, 1981), 618-628.

136 Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Andrew Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back?* (Harlow: Pearson, 2005).

137 ‘A Lad’s Letters from Bradford to Bayswater’, *YM*, 27 January 1883.

138 ‘The Sights of Leeds’, *YM*, 23 May 1885.

139 ‘The Sights of Leeds’, *YM*, 11 July 1885.

140 Ibid.

Yorkshire characteristic that could be traced back many centuries.

Yorkshire folk seem to have always been fond of music; and from the days when Caedmon struck the key-note, not only of English Psalmody, but of English Poetry, Yorkshire has sustained a reputation for musical taste and power. The singing in our churches and chapels has been widely celebrated, and many a visitor from a distance, in departing, has retained the singing of some congregations among his most cherished memories of Yorkshire.<sup>141</sup>

The quality of choral singing in the county sometimes led to a note of triumphalism.

What business have Yorkshire chorus singers to go out of their own county, and expose, by contrast, the deficiencies of their neighbours? If they could have known the anguish and the heart-burnings they have caused at Worcester, Gloucester and Hereford, I am sure they would have stopped at home and allowed the singers of the three cathedral cities the honour of singing for themselves. As it is, the latter are going in training for the next Festival, and are raising a fund to bring the local talent up to the level of Yorkshire.<sup>142</sup>

The first Leeds Musical Festival of 1858 was essentially a matter of civic prestige and a means of celebrating the new town hall. But it was also widely regarded as something especially fitting for Yorkshire and Leeds in particular, which was ‘second to no English town in its appreciation and practise of music, both vocal and instrumental’.<sup>143</sup> It was regarded as particularly appropriate that the festival’s first musical director was the Sheffield-born composer William Sterndale-Bennett. The first festival was a financial failure, but the concept was revived in 1877 and took place triennially after that, attaining national significance.

The contribution by native Yorkshire choral singers continued to be a hallmark of the Leeds Musical Festival. In 1880 it was stated that the 317-strong chorus had representatives from more than 40 towns and villages in the West Riding. But there were increasing complaints that the prestige of the Festival masked a lack of true musical enthusiasm and accomplishment in Yorkshire. In 1880 *The Yorkshireman* stated that London critics had got ‘a lamentable notion into their heads that all Yorkshiremen are musical and have been from the cradle’.<sup>144</sup> There was increasing concern that the orchestra assembled for the Festival contained very few Yorkshire musicians.<sup>145</sup> And there were frequent complaints that Yorkshire composers were not being given the opportunity to have their works performed. In May 1885 the *Yorkshire Post* ran correspondence on this subject and *The Yorkshireman* asked, ‘Why should not the Leeds Festival committee treat local composers at least on a level with Hungarians and Poles with sneezy sort of names?’<sup>146</sup> *Toby, the Yorkshire Tyke* had developed this sense of grievance, when it stated that local players were excluded from the Leeds Festival orchestra precisely because they were local and that ‘it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a living Yorkshireman... to get a work produced at the Festival. The very fact of his residence in Yorkshire is against him... The idea ought to be to make these great triennial musical gatherings as characteristic of Yorkshire as possible’.<sup>147</sup> The fact remained, however, that

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141 Richard Harland, ‘Yorkshire Hymnology’, *The Yorkshire Magazine*, June 1875.

142 *YM*, 5 November 1881.

143 *Leeds Mercury*, 16 March 1858.

144 *YM*, 16 October 1880.

145 *YM*, 22 September 1883.

146 *YM*, No 463, 30 May 1885.

147 *Toby, the Yorkshire Tyke*, 6 October 1883.

attempts to stage regular concert series in Leeds were often a financial failure and that no Yorkshire city had a professional orchestra to rank alongside that of Manchester.<sup>148</sup> These shortcomings created a regular strand of satire.

...people have got hold of the phrase 'Leeds is a musical town' and they are incessantly repeating it, parrot-like. It amuses them and pleases their vanity. I don't know that anybody is the worse for it, except perhaps the deluded professors of music, who, on the strength of the sham reputation of Leeds in this respect, have been tempted to reside here.<sup>149</sup>

In apportioning blame for the shortcomings of musical culture in Leeds, a textile metaphor was reached for once again...

The Shoddyocracy, which considers itself the haut ton of Leeds, is primarily at fault. How can the masses be expected to develop an absorbing love for art and music if those who profess to be the refined and appreciative classes are indifferent and show an invincible disinclination to plank down their money? At the big concerts in Leeds there are scores of empty seats which should be filled and paid for by the moneyed 'swells'...The popular taste is influenced from above, and the influence in Leeds is mainly hurtful, not beneficial.<sup>150</sup>

The self-satire that formed an important strand in *The Yorkshireman* and similar periodicals is useful because it reveals insecurities about identity and also tells us what behaviour was deemed to depart from normative Yorkshireness. But the periodicals also exhibited some regional self-esteem, including straightforward, charitable appraisals of the Yorkshire character. As we might expect, words such as 'bluff', 'hearty', 'plain-speaking' and 'cute' (meaning quick-witted) regularly occurred in some of the more self-satisfied passages. A dialect poem by J.H.Eccles summed up many of the favoured qualities.

*True Yorkshire bred an' born, he bore its stamp an' seal,  
Yet full ov earnest truth, an' straight from heead ta heel;  
E noations quaint an' odd, ov low an' humble birth,  
A diamond left et ruff, a man ov sterlin' worth.*

*A mind weel stored wi' facts, a friend whom yonce yo'met  
E converse grave or gaay, yo cuddn't sooin forget;  
E language broad an' plain, e figger tall an' strong;  
Whoa nivver changed a word ov hiz owd mother tongue.*

*I'm just fowks what I am, he often uzed ta saay,  
Ther's nowt stuck up e me, it izzn't e ma waay;  
I don't like fowks at sham, an' reckon ta be grand,  
I'm fond at nateral soart, 'at give yo t'heart wi't'hand.*

*Long years ov toil an' care, wi' sickness, browt him daan  
Like tul a wither'd leaf, et autumn, sere an' braan;  
"True Yorkshur" nah he sleeps, just where he wish'd ta be-  
Back e hiz native vale, under a shady tree<sup>151</sup>*

On his return from the United States in 1883, James Burnley wrote that, 'Yorkshire earnestness, Yorkshire heartiness, and Yorkshire goodwill are the things that one most misses while roaming the wilds of the Far West'.<sup>152</sup> In 1889 *The Yorkshireman* profiled new mayors throughout the county. The Mayor of Harrogate, Samson Fox, was 'a typical

148 Leeds did not acquire a full-time orchestra until the late 1940s – Gunn, *Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, p.155.

149 'Sights of Leeds' Part II, *YM*, 7 June 1885.

150 *YM*, 30 April 1890.

151 J.E. Eccles, 'True Yorkshire', *YM*, 31 March 1877.

152 *YM*, 24 February 1883.

Yorkshireman – bluff, hearty and generous – with a reputation for doing handsome things in a handsome fashion’.<sup>153</sup> A good example of this strand of self-satisfied Yorkshire identity came in a tribute to the Leeds banker and MP William Beckett, ‘a thorough Yorkshireman’ who died suddenly in 1890.

He was blunt, straightforward, shrewd, strong; strong in his likes, and strong in his dislikes. Unlike men who have ‘getten brass’ by mean pursuits, he was a generous and ready giver, and if his language was full-flavoured at times, it accorded with his character, in which there was nothing mincing or finicking... Sometimes his abruptness bordered on the offensive; but he has been known to reward instead of bearing a grudge against those who had the independence to retaliate in his own language, however humble they might be. His was, indeed, a strong, vigorous, clearly-marked personality, and of these there are not too many these days.<sup>154</sup>

Reading between the lines, it would seem that Beckett was an unpleasant individual. But he possessed characteristics that were often held up as a Yorkshire ideal.

## 6. Hail! Ferocious football!

DURING the 1880s, *The Yorkshireman* – hitherto a literary and satirical journal – embraced sports coverage on a large scale. In doing so it possibly alienated a section of its readership, sowing the seeds for ultimate decline. But this fairly abrupt transformation in the paper’s character does provide further evidence of the role that sport could play in the fostering of regional identity. In the early days of the periodical, references to sport were scanty. But by 1882 ‘football chat’ began to assume more prominence. The code favoured in the West Riding (apart from Sheffield) was rugby, the physicality of which was often deemed to match the regional character.

*Hail! Ferocious football!  
Shame it is to see  
Odes to milder pastimes,  
Ne’er a verse to thee.  
Welcome! All bespattered,  
Thick with mud and foam,  
Into sturdy Tykeshire,  
From thy Rugby home*<sup>155</sup>

The Yorkshire Challenge Cup, which had begun in 1877, became the major sporting pre-occupation. On 12 April 1884, *The Yorkshireman* carried a 47-stanza epic, a parody of Macaulay, which dealt with this competition as if it were a medieval tournament. Profiles of Yorkshire football celebrities became a regular feature and in 1887 ‘the growing popularity of this healthy game in Yorkshire’ persuaded the magazine to issue a separate weekly edition devoted to it. When this experiment ended and sports coverage was reintegrated with the main magazine, the masthead read *The Yorkshireman with which is incorporated Yorkshire Football* – the secondary title being almost equal in font size to the first. A magazine with roots in the ideals of the Yorkshire Literary Union had thus become in large part a sports periodical, concentrating on ‘Yorkshire football’, played to rules codified by a Southern middle class, but seen as a powerful expression of county identity. Association football could be regarded as distinctly ‘un-Yorkshire’. In 1890, the Skipton

<sup>153</sup> *YM*, 4 December 1889.

<sup>154</sup> *YM*, 26 November 1890.

<sup>155</sup> ‘A Ferocious Flight of Fancy’, verses one and two, *YM*, 21 October 1882.



MP Walter Morrison was upbraided.

How can you expect to get votes in the West Riding of Yorkshire when you deliberately allege, openly, in public, at a bazaar, that Association football is better than Rugby? It is surely not necessary for a good Unionist to hold that faith. And it is quite impossible for a good Yorkshireman to vote for the man who holds it.<sup>156</sup>

It might well be that the success of the Yorkshire County Cricket Club in the 1890s played a seminal role in creating a pan-county identity. But rugby football played a similar role in the 1880s.<sup>157</sup> Dealing with this period of football history, Tony Collins writes that

there were rivalries and jealousies between different regions. However, in the main, these tended to involve Yorkshire and the county's perceived slights by either the metropolitan rulers of the sport or their fellow-northerners across the Pennines... To Yorkshire rugby enthusiasts, it was not a question of North versus South but of Yorkshire versus the Rest.<sup>158</sup>

When an international match between England and Wales was played at Dewsbury in 1890, the Welsh line-up included a member of the local team. The result was that the crowd, to a man, cheered for Wales 'simply because Stadden figured in the team... and scarce a cheer was raised for the Englishmen, indeed one or two of them seemed to be objects of derision more than anything else'.<sup>159</sup>

Within the pages of *The Yorkshireman*, there was discernible tension between the literary and sporting aspects of the publication. Explaining poor attendances at the Grand Theatre, the Mephistopheles figure in the satirical series 'Sights of Leeds' commented that 'sport has great attractions in this part of the country. Football, cricket and horse racing are all the rage... it isn't much use providing intellectual entertainment to the public when the majority would take more delight in a knur and spell match'.<sup>160</sup> Poems and articles would occasionally mock the pre-occupation with football and in April 1889 it was announced that

during the football season the space usually devoted to gossip and humorous sketches and drawings has been entrenched upon, and no doubt the forbearance of a large section of our readers has been strained. During the Summer months the claims of this class will be duly recognised... We can assure all classes of readers that no efforts will be spared to maintain the position of the Yorkshireman as the leading journal of its class out of London, and make the perusal of its pages a source of enjoyment in the household of every Yorkshireman 'all the world round'.<sup>161</sup>

The attempt to appeal to a dual readership – sporting and literary – was a challenge that was proving hard to meet. Also, the extent to which 'Yorkshire football' was as an element of Yorkshireness began to wane. After the controversies over professionalism of the mid-1890s, the creation of a new governing body – initially the Northern Rugby Football Union, later the Rugby Football League – meant that the reshaped game became an expression of wider Northern identity. Meanwhile, the appeal of association football – which organised its competitions nationwide – became more widespread and Collins has

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156 *YM*, 2 April 1890

157 When a county championship began in 1888, Yorkshire was victorious seven times in its first eight years.

158 Collins, *Rugby's Great Split*, p.54.

159 'Football Chat', *YM*, 19 February 1890.

160 'Sights of Leeds', *YM*, 27 June 1885. Knur and spell, now effectively extinct, although subject to occasional revival, was sometimes dubbed 'the working man's golf'. It involved the striking of a porcelain ball over the greatest possible distance.

161 *YM*, 9 April 1889.

used this as a symptom of the nationalisation of culture.<sup>162</sup> As it neared the end of its 24-year publishing history, *The Yorkshireman* itself began to demonstrate symptoms of this process. An attempt to establish the Yorkshire territorial credentials of people in public life, from politicians to stage performers, continued to be a feature of the periodical until late in its existence and there would always be an interest in Yorkshire exceptionalism. However, as *The Yorkshireman* declined in the later 1890s, it began to carry frequent photographs and articles about popular stage performers, such as Marie Lloyd, whose national fame required no attempted Yorkshire tie-in, apart from the fact that they were appearing in the region. Trends of this sort demonstrate that the cultural self-sufficiency which had been an important aspect of the Yorkshire periodicals was weakening. In its later years *The Yorkshireman* was plainly struggling to fill its pages. A story entitled ‘The Last Days of Catherine of Medici’ would not have found a place in *The Yorkshireman* of the 1870s and 1880s, but it did in the edition of 27 April 1895. Photographic reproduction had become simpler and cheaper, making it easy and economical to insert a supplied publicity shot of a London-based or an American music hall artiste. This contributed to a dilution of regionalism as *The Yorkshireman* neared its bathetic end in 1899.

In the course of a resume of the publishing history of *The Yorkshireman*, this chapter has shown that, implicitly and explicitly, the ‘comic papers’ of Yorkshire are an excellent source for its self-perceptions and insecurities during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and they exemplify the cultural self-sufficiency of the county at this period. Earlier in the century, a publication with ‘Yorkshire’ in its title might have had little or no specifically regional content. The fact that this changed markedly in the second half of the century, so that *The Yorkshireman* was the product of a distinct regionalist literary culture that focussed on the affairs and preoccupations of urban Yorkshire, can be taken to indicate a growth in regional sentiment and identity. Equally, the decline of the periodicals and their increased reliance on deregionalised material in the later 1890s suggests that this sense of locale and county-based regionalism had diminished. This would fit the conventional timetable for the nationalisation of culture. However, the local newspaper press continued to flourish. Indeed, one reason for the decline of magazines such as *The Yorkshireman* might be that the region’s newspapers had superseded them, with special weekly editions that included literary and humorous content. For example, the 1880s saw the creation of the *Yorkshire Weekly Post*, an offshoot of the *Yorkshire Post*, a magazine-like miscellany that would have a 50-year existence.<sup>163</sup>

## Conclusion

The late-nineteenth century saw the wax and the wane of a distinctive tier of journalism consisting of topical and satirical ‘comic papers’ published in urban centres. They identified closely with their locale or region, and those published in Yorkshire – especially the long-running *The Yorkshireman* – can fruitfully be examined for county-based identities, albeit with an urban West Riding focus. In the first half of the nineteenth century, a title such as ‘The Yorkshireman’ would have been a flag of convenience. But the

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<sup>162</sup> Collins, *Rugby’s Great Split*, p.54.

<sup>163</sup> Gibb and Beckwith, *The Yorkshire Post*, p.46.

explosion of popular newspaper and periodical publishing encouraged and enabled a strong sense of locality and cultural regionalism at the very period when economic confidence, political self-determination and cultural self-esteem were at their height in the provinces of England.

*The Yorkshireman*, and comparable publications, had no politically regionalist agenda and the magazine faced difficulties when it tried to reach out beyond its West Riding base. Indeed, it did not attempt to conceal its near contempt for rural regions of the county and adopted a patronising attitude towards York. Despite these limitations, a number of themes emerge that reveal how the literary, cultured (and mostly male) inhabitants of the most heavily-populated and influential part of the county saw themselves in the late-Victorian period. Unsurprisingly, some of the more clichéd and self-satisfied aspects of Yorkshireness receive an airing. We also learn a lot about the sporting, musical and some of the political proclivities of the time, but there are occasional insecurities. For example, the musicality of Yorkshire was an important part of the county's identity, but there were fears that this was self-delusory.

An element that makes *The Yorkshireman* a good study, alongside its relative longevity and editorial consistency, is the fact that it employed a locally-based artist whom contemporaries believed had a special insight into Yorkshire character and identity. Also, dialect material in *The Yorkshireman* furnished a strong sense of place and regional cultural assertiveness. The presence of dialect poetry and prose in what was, initially at least, a literary journal for the middle classes, indicates that such material was important in the formation and sustenance of a trans-class regional identity. The Yorkshire credentials or birthright of individuals was considered by the periodicals to be a matter of importance (or perhaps mock-importance on occasions) and there was concern about the moral effects of absence from the county, especially if it was spent in the 'Babylon' of London.

*The Yorkshireman* proclaimed itself a satirical journal and its regional self-satire is of particular assistance. For example, there was repeated concern that the wasteful, gentrified offspring of that classic West Riding product, the self-made man, were undermining the county's economic prospects and cultural distinctiveness. This tells us that industriousness and self-reliance were seen as quintessential elements of Yorkshire identity, seen to be under threat from deregionalised metropolitan fashions and values.

## Chapter 5.

# The Yorkshire dialect almanac

## 1. 'Within reach of the great demos'



**Figure 1:** Yorkshire dialect almanacs of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, published (from left) in Halifax, Wortley and Barnsley.

IN December 1898, the 58-year-old John Hartley, frequently dubbed 'The Yorkshire Poet' and sole author of the most popular dialect almanac in the county, paid what was intended to be a valedictory visit as a recitalist to his home town of Halifax. He was interviewed by a reporter from one of the local newspapers, who introduced his article with a rhetorical question – 'Who does not read John Hartley's *Clock Almanack*?'<sup>1</sup> The implication was that this publication, to which Hartley first contributed in 1866 and would continue to write until his death in 1915, was almost universally known and read in the West Riding. This adds qualitative evidence to the limited amount of quantitative information about the sale of the almanac.<sup>2</sup> Without furnishing a source, W.J. Halliday stated that the 1887 issue of the *Clock* sold 80,000 copies and that this was still being achieved more than 50 years later.<sup>3</sup> In 1892 an advertisement claimed that the sale of the *Clock* was 'not less than 110,000 and increases yearly'.<sup>4</sup> Hartley, in one of the prefaces in which he communicated directly with readers about the mechanics of his work, expressed the ambition to hit a sales target of a quarter of a million, claiming that 'it's creepin on varry steadily towards it'.<sup>5</sup> If Hartley

1 'A chat with the founder of the *Clock Almanack*', *Halifax Guardian*, 10 December 1898.

2 During the nineteenth century the spelling of 'almanack' with a final 'k' was common. Here the customary modern spelling will be followed, except in cases of titles and quotations.

3 W.J. Halliday, 'John Hartley', *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society*, Part XXXX Vol VI, 1939, 27-34. The *Clock Almanack* continued to be published until 1956, having shown a loss for the first time in 1952 – J.E. Watmough, *Watmoughs 1888-1965* (Bradford: Watmoughs, 1989), p.69.

4 From the rear cover of John Hartley, *Grimes' Visit to th' Queen* (London and Wakefield: W. Nicholson & Sons, 1892).

5 John Hartley, *The Original Clock Almanack 1897* (Wakefield: W. Nicholson and Sons, 1896), p.2. Note that almanacs were usually published in the October of the preceding year so that the actual publication date differs from that of the title.



had meant readership rather than unit sales he might not have exaggerated unduly. With a dialect almanac or annual, containing much material intended to be recited, the gap between actual sale and the audience for the material was likely to be wider even than for other types of publication.

The *Clock Almanack* was the most successful Yorkshire publication of its type, but it was preceded, complemented and sometimes imitated by a large number of similar publications in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth. Some of these fell into the category of annuals – cheaply sold anthologies of dialect verse and prose – but many followed the almanac format, which at its simplest consisted of paired pages for every month of the year. The left-hand page would have a grid containing a calendar and notable anniversaries or religious festivals for each day. The phases of the moon for the month would be given and additional space filled with a homily or poem, usually in dialect [Figure 2]. The right-hand page would be filled with dialect poetry or prose, nominally reflecting on the characteristics of the month or season. Yorkshire almanac writers would experiment with this restrictive format, sometimes in ingenious ways. After the 12 months of the year had been dealt with, remaining editorial space would be filled with additional prose and poetry. There would also be substantial amounts of advertising.

The almanacs, small publications in crown 8vo format (approximately 18 x 12 cms) and usually numbering up to 50 or 60 pages, would be hawked or sold at a cover price that was typically threepence, as was the case with the *Clock*. The Yorkshire literary entrepreneur Charles Frederick Forshaw, given to pompous modes of expression, stated that the modest price of Hartley's publications 'brings them within reach of the great Demos'.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes cover prices were as low as a penny, as with *The Dewsbury Back at Mooin Olmenoc* in the 1860s. Bob Stubbs – pseudonym for the Bradford dialect writer William Saville – sold some of his early-twentieth century publications for a penny, and accompanied the cover price with the arch comment 'It's Yorksher, tha knows!'

The fact that different counties and regions selected subtly different modes of dialect publication for mass readerships is in itself evidence of an impulse to celebrate or retain regional or local distinctiveness during the later-nineteenth century. The almanac was the

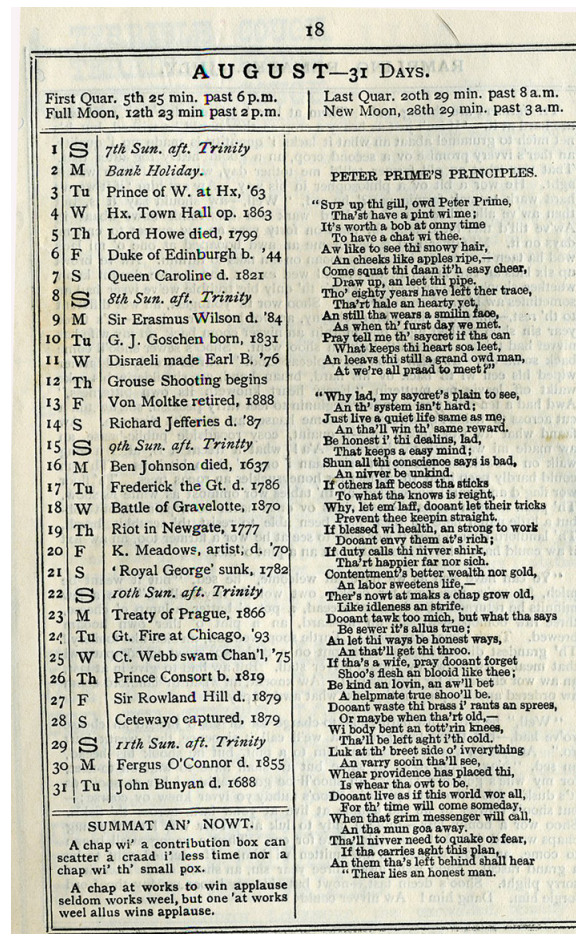
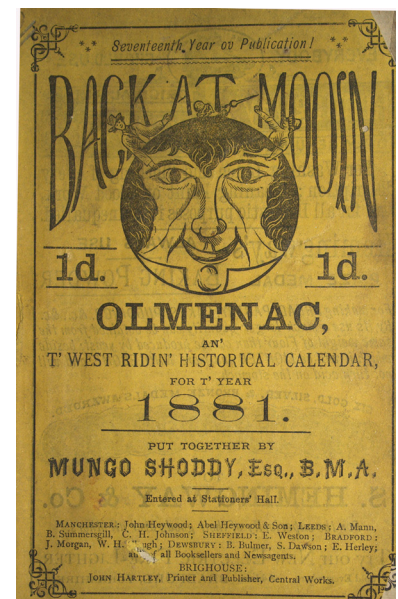


Figure 2: From *The Original Clock Almanack* of 1897, a typical left-hand page grid, with calendar, anniversaries, commemorations, church festivals, lunar information, a dialect poem and dialect aphorisms to fill the space.

6 Charles F. Forshaw, *John Hartley: An Appreciation* (Bradford: Thornton and Pearson, 1909), p.16.

form of populist dialect publication most distinctive to Yorkshire. Its proliferation in the county, principally the West Riding with its mass urban market, shows a regional identity being constructed, propagated and celebrated by and for a working-class and arguably middle-class readership. Evidence for the trans-class appeal of these publications will be offered and this chapter will also examine some of the ‘spin-off’ productions by the almanac writers, especially John Hartley. As to why it was the almanac and not, for example, the popular reciter or the dialect song book, that enjoyed the most success in Yorkshire, it is possible to advance an explanation based on the new nature of a factory-based society, in which date as well as time assumed an additional importance. But the greater likelihood is that simple imitation of a successful formula created a ‘craze’ for dialect almanacs within a particular region. There might be some bathos in such an explanation, but it does not diminish the degree of regional cultural self-determination represented by the almanacs.

The term ‘sub-regional’ might be more appropriate because many of the publications reflected the dialect variants, the customs and the predominant trades of their locales. The *Back at Mooin Olmenoc*, for example, was attributed to the pseudonymous Mungo Shoddy, a dual reference to cloths produced in the Heavy Woollen area of the West Riding, which probably had the greatest concentration of almanacs, including *T’Bag o’Shoddy Olmenac*, first issued in 1866 in Batley, and *T’owd Original Coddly Miln Olmenock*, which appeared in Heckmondwike in 1870. From 1875, *The Weyver’s Awn Comic Olmenoc* was published in Pudsey. Halifax had a *Beacon Almanack*, named after the town’s topographical landmark, Beacon Hill. In Bradford during the late 1850s, one of the earlier dialect publications was named *T’Bishop Blaize Olmenac*, after the patron saint of woolcombers, who was celebrated at septennial Bishop Blaize Festivals, although the last of these had been in 1825, which is an indication of the nostalgia for earlier modes of industrial production highly evident in the almanacs.<sup>7</sup> Andrew Walker observes that ‘nostalgia permeates much of the dialect literature and has the effect of anchoring readers to their locality, reminding them of changed landscapes and altering customary ways’.<sup>8</sup>



**Figure 3:** Top, *Saunterer's Satchel*, published in Bradford. Above, *Back 'at Mooin Olmenac*, published in Brighouse. Special Collections, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds

7 For the Bishop Blaize festivals, see James Burnley, *The History of Wool and Woolcombing* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1889), pp.187-210.

8 Andrew Walker, ‘“My Native Twang”: Identities and the West Riding nineteenth-century dialect literature of John Hartley and “The Shevvild Chap”’ in Alyson Brown (ed.), *Historical Perspectives of Social Identities* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2008), p.30.



While some of these publications might have enjoyed only a local sale and had a limited life, others achieved longevity and a wider distribution, in spite of their apparent specificity. The *Bairnsla Foaks' Annual and Pogmoor Olmenock*, written by Tom Treddlehoyle (alias Charles Rogers), probably the first Yorkshire dialect almanac proper, began in Barnsley in 1836 and continued until its author's death in 1875. Its circulation was reported to be 'extensive, not merely in Yorkshire, Lancashire and other Northern Counties, but throughout the whole of the United Kingdom and extended even to the British Colonies'.<sup>9</sup> The same can be said of Hartley's *Clock Almanack*, which began in 1865 as a modest publication in Halifax, moved to Bradford, where it was published by Wm Byles and Son, proprietors of the *Bradford Observer*, and, from 1878 it was taken over by Nicholson's of Wakefield, one of the largest regional publishing companies, which maintained a London office. In some publicity material, Nicholson's stated, rather ungrammatically, that 'John Hartley's works still maintain their popularity, not only in Yorkshire, but it extends to many parts of the kingdom and in the Colonies. His books have been highly reviewed, unasked, by the Press in Australia'.<sup>10</sup> Hartley's obituary stated that *The Clock Almanack's* biggest sale was in London.<sup>11</sup>

A Yorkshire diaspora throughout the UK and the Empire created a wider market for dialect material from the home county. The 1874 *Clock Almanack* – temporarily written by Edmund Hatton – was dedicated 'to all Yorkshiremen throughout the world'. Bob Stubbs (alias William Saville) claimed that he had 'come to feel missen a center o' numberless friends, i' all parts o' Yorksher an Lankyshe, in fact friends i' all parts ov England and...i' all parts o' t' world'. He had received letters from Ireland, Canada, the USA, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa.<sup>12</sup> In 1890, Hartley's preface referred to the 'monny thousands' of readers 'scattered over th' face o' th' earth... sittin' under strange trees, under burnin' suns, an surranded wi' strange crayturs... they read th' tales an rhymes i' th' *Clock* at some kind friend has sent 'em an ther thowts fly back to ther hooam amang the Yorksher hills'.<sup>13</sup>

This introduction has begun to demonstrate some of the vitality of dialect almanac publishing in Yorkshire from the mid-nineteenth century. It is possible to show that the county was exceptional in this regard. In 1877, the English Dialect Society published a bibliography 'of the works that have been published, or are known to exist in MS, illustrative of the various dialects of English'. It was edited by two leading scholars in the field, the Rev Walter W. Skeat and J.H. Nodal. They dealt with England on a county basis and the dialect literature of Yorkshire was examined by C. Clough Robinson, whose other publications included *The Dialect of Leeds and its Neighbourhood* (1862) and *A Glossary of Words pertaining to the dialect of Mid-Yorkshire* (1876). In his introductory notes to his section of the EDS bibliography, Robinson was pessimistic about the state of dialect literature in Yorkshire, compared to that of Lancashire. Indeed, a sense of inferiority

9 A. Paterson, 'Charles Rogers, Dialect Writer', in William Smith (ed.), *Old Yorkshire*, New Series, Vol 3 (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1891), pp.112-117.

10 From an undated publicity flyer for 'John Hartley's Unrivalled Works' issued by W. Nicholson and Sons Ltd – Special Collections, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

11 *Yorkshire Post*, 20 December 1915.

12 Preface, Bob Stubbs' *Original Comic Yorksher Awmyrnack for 1909* (Bradford: Watmough, 1908).

13 John Hartley, *The Original Clock Almanack 1890* (Wakefield: Nicholson, 1889), p.2.

**TABLE 1: Nineteenth and early twentieth century Yorkshire dialect almanacs and annuals**

- 1837-1853** *The Shevvild Chap's Annual*, by Abel Bywater. Sheffield.
- 1836-1883** *The Bairnsla Foak's Annual an Pogmoor Olmenock*. Barnsley. (pub. in Leeds).
- 1852-1863** *T'Frogland Comic Almanack*. Leeds.
- 1855-1858** *The Bome Miln Olmenoc, an' Bradforth an West Riding Annual. Be Timothy Shoddygull*. Cleckheaton.
- 1856** *T'Puddecock Almanack*. Heckmondwike.
- 1858** *T'Bishop Blaize Almanack*. Bradford.
- 1861 -1882** *T'Yorkshire Alminac, written according tea nater, e plain English, without Grammar, or onny mak o' beak larning*. By Nathaniel Nettlebase. Leeds.
- 1862-1875** *Tommy Toddles's Comic Almenac, Fur all t'Fowks l' t'World, an' rahnd abaght... be Tommy Toddles, Ees-quear, Braan-munger, Skysopher, Weatherologer, Fearful Larn'd, an' Yorkshire*. Leeds.
- 1862-1881** *The Dewsbre Back at Mooin Olmenoc*. Dewsbury.
- 1864 -1880** *The Nidderdill Olminoc, an Ivvery Body's Kalinder*. Pateley Bridge.
- 1866** *T'Bag o' Shoddy Olmenac*. Batley
- 1867** *T'Toadpipes Mill Almenack*. Batley
- 1867- 1956** *The Original Illuminated Clock Almanack*. Halifax, Bradford and Wakefield.
- 1869- 1874** *The Pudsey Almanack and Historical Register*. Pudsey
- 1870** *T'owd Original Cuddy Miln Olmenock*. Heckmondwike,
- 1870** *The Swashland Olmenoc*. Dewsbury
- 1871-1901** *Draper's Pictorial Almanack*. Bradford
- 1872** *Tommy's Annual*. Leeds.
- 1872** *The Wakefield 'Free Press' Almanac*. Wakefield.
- 1873 -1882** *T'Leeds-Loiners' Comic Almanac*. Leeds.
- 1873** *Howorth, Cowenhead and Bogthorne Original Almenack*. Keighley
- 1873-1876** *Th' Beacon Almanack in the Yorkshire Twang*. Halifax.
- 1873** *Bill at Hoylus End's Haworth, Gowenheead, an' Bogthorn Almanack*. Keighley.
- 1875-1882** *Saunterer's Satchel and West Riding Almanack*. Bradford.
- 1875-1901** *The Weyver's Awn Comic Olminack, or Pudsey Annual*. Pudsey.
- 1876- 1893** *The Yorkshireman Comic Annual Almanac*. Bradford.
- 1877** *Rhodes' Family Almanack in the Halifax Dialect*.
- 1878** *Clayton's Christmas Annual*. Bradford.
- 1879-1880** *The New Wortley Almanack*. Leeds.
- 1882-1892** *The Wilsden Almanac*. Wilsden.
- 1906 -1921** *Bob Stubbs' Original Comic Yorksher Awmynack*. Bradford.

Sources include: CC.Robinson, 'Notes on the Dialectal Literature of the County [Yorkshire]' in Walter W.Skeat and J.H.Nodal (eds), *A Bibliographical List of the works that have been published, or are known to exist in MS, illustrative of the various dialects of English* (London: Trübner and Co, for the English Dialect Society, 1877); Survey of dialect almanacs published on 7 Jan, 1882 by the Leeds *Mercury*; Charles A. Federer, 'A Bibliography of Yorkshire Dialect Literature', *Transactions of The Yorkshire Dialect Society*, Vol I, Part III (Bradford, H.Gaskarth, for the YDS, 1898), pp.86-101. Where the various sources furnished slightly different publication dates, Federer was generally followed. Some of the publications were entirely in dialect, while others included standard English content.

towards dialect poetry and prose from west of the Pennines was widely felt. Edwin Waugh, the 'Lancashire Laureate', was feted on his visits to Yorkshire.<sup>14</sup> In 1909, a Halifax newspaper editorialised on the bi-centenary of the birth of the seminal Lancashire poet Tim Bobbin and concluded that 'Yorkshire, we regret, has produced few dialect writers who can at all be classed with the best in Lancashire'.<sup>15</sup> This verdict has remained in place and West

<sup>14</sup> See W.Scruton, 'Edwin Waugh in Yorkshire', *Yorkshire County Magazine*, Vol III (Bingley, 1893), 122-125.

<sup>15</sup> *Halifax Weekly Courier*, 10 April 1909. For an explanation of the 'great upsurge of creativity and interest in the writing and speaking of the dialect' in Lancashire and its literary status, see Brian



Riding dialect writers have been subject to considerably less analysis than their Lancashire counterparts.<sup>16</sup>

In his contribution to the EDS bibliography, Clough Robinson devised a rather contrived explanation for this alleged literary disparity.

It is not to be wondered at that, in respect to this form of dialect literature [poetry], the neighbouring county of Lancaster offers a marked contrast. There, the manufacturing people are most, and have not been dropped among the fastnesses of hills to become isolated populations, as they of south-west Yorkshire have. Lancashire is, too, dependent, as Yorkshire is not, on one staple article of manufacture for her prosperity. Want must pinch, and hard times come about the soonest to such an aggregate population, and, quite as naturally, must a homely dialect be made the vehicle of sentiment among so many. In prose literature there is but little in any Yorkshire phase, apart from what these almanacs contain, which is, as a rule, any ill-spelt absurdity that will cover space.<sup>17</sup>

It is obvious that Robinson was not an enthusiast for dialect almanacs. He added several barbed comments when discussing individual publications. But despite his literary and dialectal qualms, he furnished a list of ‘general specimens’ of Yorkshire dialect material that included 20 almanacs and annuals. It was not exhaustive and can be supplemented from archival and other sources [*Table 1*].

The Lancashire section of the *Bibliographical List* occupies 35 pages, whereas Yorkshire was dealt with in 23.<sup>18</sup> But although there is no doubting the rich variety and literary quality of the Lancashire material, it is possible to identify very few publications that are analogous to the popular almanacs and annuals of Yorkshire.<sup>19</sup> The section covering Northumberland, including Newcastle, is notable for the large numbers of Tyneside song collections, but has just one dialect annual and one almanac. There are isolated examples from West Cornwall, Cumberland, Lincolnshire, but the point is easily made that this genre of populist publishing was overwhelmingly a Yorkshire phenomenon. For the early-twentieth century scholar F.W. Moorman, the almanacs were ‘the most characteristic product of the West Riding dialect movement’.

Their popularity and ever-increasing circulation is a sure proof of their wide appeal, and there can be no doubt that they have done an immense service in rendering the local idiom in which they are written to those who speak it, and also in interpreting the life and thought of the great industrial communities for which they are written.<sup>20</sup>

The origins and progress of the almanacs and their significance in the context of Yorkshire’s regional identity and its relation to the political and imperial centre will be traced below. Also, there will be a consideration of the lives, backgrounds and motivations of some of the leading authors in the field, principally Abel Bywater, Charles Rogers and John Hartley.

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Hollingworth, ‘Lancashire Writing and the Antiquarians’, *Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, Vol 6 (2) Autumn 1985, 27-35. Also, Brian Hollingworth, *Songs of the People: Lancashire Dialect Poetry of the Industrial Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977).

16 Walker ‘“My Native Twang”’, p.25.

17 CC.Robinson, ‘Notes on the Dialectal Literature of the County’ in Walter W.Skeat and J.H.Nodal (eds), *A Bibliographical List of the works that have been published, or are known to exist in MS, illustrative of the various dialects of English* (London: Trübner and Co, for the English Dialect Society, 1877), p.109.

18 In both cases this was considerably more space than that devoted to any other county.

19 The *Bibliographical List* has Abel Heywood’s *Christmas Budget* and *Owd Wisdom’s Lankishire Awm-mack for th’ yer 1860*. Vicinus states that in Lancashire, ‘threepenny pamphlets and penny journals’ served in place of almanacs – *The Industrial Muse*, p.201.

20 Moorman, *Yorkshire Dialect Poems*, p.xxxxii.

## 2. Origins of the almanac

THE term ‘almanac’ can be used to cover a wide variety of publications, including annuals and year books containing literary and historical material or consisting purely of data designed to be of practical use, such as *Whitaker’s Almanac*, a work of reference first published in 1868. By origin, and indeed by definition, however, an almanac would incorporate a calendar and astronomical information, which was often, although not invariably, complemented by astrological and prophetic material.

The popularity of the almanac was such that by the mid-seventeenth century an estimated 400,000 copies were sold annually in England, outstripping sales of the Bible.<sup>21</sup> The potentially subversive nature of almanacs, especially their prognostications, resulted in a monopoly in their publication being granted to the Worshipful Company of Stationers in 1603. From 1710, a tax of twopence was levied on book almanacs and by 1815 this had risen to 15d. The quantity of stamped almanacs on the market was hugely outstripped by the illicit sale of unstamped almanacs, illustrating the demand for such material.<sup>22</sup> The duty was abolished in 1834, opening the floodgates for almanac production of all kinds, and setting the scene for the cheaply priced Yorkshire dialect almanacs – Charles Rogers’s seminal *Bairnsla Foaks’ Annual* first appeared in 1837.

Maureen Perkins acknowledges the perennial problem of appraising the readership for popular material, but she suggests that almanacs generally might have acquired a trans-class market.<sup>23</sup> In *The Industrial Muse*, Martha Vicinus concludes that dialect material of the later-nineteenth century was ‘a popular indigenous literature that spoke to and for the prosperous working class of the industrial North’.<sup>24</sup> Her categorisation of readership is astute but perhaps too restrictive. When the newspaper reporter quoted at the beginning of this chapter asked ‘who does *not* [italics mine] read the *Clock Almanack*?’ there was a clear implication that such material transcended socio-economic boundaries. If it can be deduced that the wave of Yorkshire dialect almanacs had a following among both the middle and the working classes then their role in reflecting and constructing a purely regional identity is significant.

A chapter dealing with dialect almanacs during their heyday from 1860-1914 appears in Patrick Joyce’s *Visions of the People*. The author shows that the dialect literature that flourished in Lancashire and Yorkshire in the latter half of the nineteenth century had roots in oral culture and the ballad tradition, but was also something fresh.

What was new was the emergence of known no-longer anonymous authors writing in an often ‘literary’ way for a mass audience and one that made up a more commercially developed market

21 Maureen Perkins, *Visions of the Future* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p.17. Her book is the most useful monograph on the subject of almanacs in the early nineteenth century and the various ideological controversies surrounding them. For challenges to some of her conclusions see Jill Allaway, *Paper ghosts : the almanack and year book 1790-1860* (unpublished thesis, University of Huddersfield, 2004); Brian Maidment, ‘Re-arranging the Year: the Almanac, the Day Book and the Year Book as Popular Literary Forms, 1789-1860’ in Juliet John and Alice Jenkins (eds), *Rethinking Victorian Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p.94. For a comprehensive early history of almanacs and their social and political significance, see Bernard Capp, *English Almanacs 1500-1800* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1979).

22 Patricia Hollis, *The Pauper Press* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.75; Perkins, *Visions of the Future*, p.77; Allaway, *Paper ghosts*, pp.5-6.

23 Perkins, *Visions of the Future*, p.7.

24 Vicinus, *Industrial Muse*, p.185.

than hitherto. This market was exploited by sometimes quite large-scale publishing entrepreneurs... [Dialect almanacs] were written by workingmen with a little education... or, often much the same thing, by small printers or stationers who also published them. They were hawked or sold in a range of retail outlets such as grocery shops, news vendors or the very rudimentary 'bookshops' of the time. They represent an extraordinary outpouring of 'penny capitalist' production...<sup>25</sup>

Joyce's appraisal of the dialect authors, with their relatively modest level of education, is a sound generalisation. They were also men – and they seem to have been exclusively men – who, once they had conceived literary ambitions, had the energy and the scope to use them as the basis for a self-fashioned career. These were authors from an artisanal background who adopted an artisanal approach to literature, writing, editing and often illustrating entire almanacs on an annual basis and usually developing spin-offs, such as the pamphlets and books of Yorkshire dialect tales and poems – often marketed as recital material for 'elocutionists'<sup>26</sup> – that John Hartley, Bob Stubbs, Charles Rogers and others issued in some profusion. These self-made literary careers – in collaboration with a regional publisher – were rarely lucrative. Hartley spent his later years in poverty and if men like Rogers and Abel Bywater were more comfortably off, it was probably because of their 'day jobs' in non-literary trades. Yet there is no doubt that in later-nineteenth century Yorkshire, more than any other part of England with the exception of Lancashire, an appetite for unequivocally regional material could enable and sustain a literary career, accompanied by a degree of local celebrity and even some wider renown.

### 3. The Shevvild Chap and the City of Pogmoor

TRACES of Yorkshire speech patterns have been located in medieval and early modern texts, such as the fifteenth-century Towneley Mystery Plays, of Wakefield. When the boastful sheep-stealer Mak is urged to 'take outt that Sothren tothe', a medieval North-South cultural divide is neatly encapsulated.<sup>27</sup> The late-seventeenth century saw the first appearance of material expressly written, with some didactic intent, in a Yorkshire dialect – *A Yorkshire Dialogue Between An Awd Wife, a Lass and a Butcher*, a broadside printed in York (1673); and *A Yorkshire Dialogue it its pure natural Dialect as it is now commonly spoken in the North parts of Yorkshire*, published in York in 1684 and attributed to the Northallerton attorney George Meriton. This work was accompanied by 'an Alphabetical Clavis', or glossary, 'unfolding the meaning of all the Yorkshire words made use of in the aforegoing dialogue'.<sup>28</sup> There are specimens of published Yorkshire dialect poetry, prose and didactic material from the eighteenth century,<sup>29</sup> but it was in the 1830s that foundations were laid for the publishing phenomenon of the West Riding dialect almanac.

25 Joyce, *Visions of the People*, pp. 257 and 260.

26 This term did not, at this period, did not necessarily refer to a speaker of polished standard English. John Hartley, noted for his recitals of principally dialect material, was described in advertisements as a 'finished elocutionist' (e.g. back page advertisement, *The Clock Almanack*, 1889); a 1913 advertisement for Bob Stubbs's 'new and original' *Yorkshire Dialect Recitations* was headed 'Good news for elocutionists'.

27 'The Second Shepherd's Play' of the *Towneley Corpus Christi Cycle* – text available at <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~scriptor/towneley/> [accessed 29 December 2009]

28 The dialect poem and glossary followed a poem in standard English entitled *The Praise of Yorkshire Ale* – facsimile edition published by Ken Spelman, York, 1975.

29 See Moorman (ed.), *Yorkshire Dialect Poems*.

Abel Bywater (1795-1873), the son of a Sheffield tailor and Independent preacher, began his career as a pamphleteer in standard English. His *Popery Unveiled*, an attack on Catholic emancipation, was locally published in 1826. From 1830 a series of dialogues entitled *The Sheffield Dialect*, attributed to ‘A Shevvild Chap’, appeared in the *Sheffield Courant*. They were subsequently issued as pamphlets, under the title *Wheelswharf Chronicle* – ‘wheelswarf’ being a dialect term for a sludge formed during the knife-grinding process. From 1836, under his own name, Bywater began to issue *The Shevvild Chap’s Annual*. His *Wheelswharf Chronicle* items were collated in book form in 1839, receiving several subsequent editions.<sup>30</sup> This book, entitled *The Sheffield Dialect*, was prefaced by a glossary of dialect terms and its first dialogue is instigated by a ‘Gentleman’, who explains that, ‘Having obtained a tolerable knowledge of the various dialects of the counties of Stafford, Lancaster and Derby, I determined to finish my excursion by taking a tour through Yorkshire’. He seeks speakers of Yorkshire dialect by visiting ‘the principal manufactories’ of Sheffield. For the first time, perhaps, it is fully acknowledged that dialect speech is as much an urban/industrial as it is a pastoral phenomenon. F.W. Moorman, who included Bywater’s *Sheffield Cutler’s Song* in his 1916 anthology *Yorkshire Dialect Poems* analyses a ‘new note which is heard when we pass from rural Yorkshire to the noisy manufacturing cities’.<sup>31</sup>

The initial implication is that with this device of the inquisitive gentleman, preceded by a glossary, Bywater’s didactic intent is purely dialectal. But when the traveller falls in with a group of Sheffield knife grinders, they proceed to deliver homilies and diatribes concerning various political and social issues of the day, one of the most impassioned being a rant delivered by ‘Bill Heftpoip’ on legislation that relaxed regulations on the opening of beer houses. ‘If ivver t’morrals ov a nashion wor blasted boi legislative innactments, t’morrals o England’s blasted nah’.<sup>32</sup> In contrast to most, if not all of the other prominent Yorkshire dialect writers of the nineteenth century, Bywater had an almost continual polemic purpose, anti-Catholicism being one of his most frequent themes. Bywater also displayed a misogynistic strain of patriarchalism, for example in a pamphlet by The Shevvild Chap entitled *The Gossips or Pictures of Private Loife Amang’t Wimmin*. It was ‘intended to expose the evils which beset the humbler ranks when under the control of corrupt influences’, illustrated by conversations among women with names such as Dinah Doubletongue, Sally Slutterdish, Mally Mendnowt, and Betty Longtongue.<sup>33</sup>

In 1838 Bywater published a dialogue entitled *The Great Millennium Humbug*, described as ‘the Shevvild Chap’s opinion of Robert Owen’s socialism’. Bywater was himself a Liberal, with utilitarian beliefs. In an 1857 annual, writing in the guise of an

30 A posthumous 1877 edition, published by Nicholson’s of Wakefield and Rodgers of Sheffield, includes a *Memoir* of Bywater by Albert Middleton. See also, Frank Taylor ‘The Bibliography of Yorkshire Dialect Literature’, *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society*, Vol III, part XXI, 10.

31 Moorman (ed.), *Yorkshire Dialect Poems*, p.xxxi. Vicinus sees the merging of the urban and the rural as the most interesting characteristic of what she terms ‘the new dialect’. ‘Writers fashioned a language that grafted a new vocabulary of the city streets, factories and mines to the older rural vernacular’ – *Industrial Muse*, p.190.

32 Abel Bywater, *The Sheffield Dialect* (Wakefield: W. Nicholson; Sheffield: Thomas Rodgers, 1877), p.26.

33 Advertisement in *The Shevvild Chap’s Christmas Present*.



everyman named Dick Healey, he gives his allegiance to the ‘fair an honnest principle, o t’ “greatest good for t’greatest number”; that’s abaht moi text e owt at’s oather to do we t’ moral, civil, or political guverment o’ this country...’<sup>34</sup> It can be seen from the examples given that Bywater used Sheffield dialect and trade metaphors as a means of engaging in a national political, moral and religious discourse. He achieved some national distribution. For example, *The Shevvild Chap’s Christmas Present* was described on the cover as being ‘sold by John Kaye and Co, Fleet Street, London, and all booksellers’. He did not issue almanacs with calendrical or astronomical content, but Bywater’s dialect pamphlets and annuals established a pattern that would be taken up by other Yorkshire authors.

In his polemical discourse, Abel Bywater was atypical. But in other respects he was a model for the almanac and annual writers who followed him, not least in the manner that his prolific literary career was subsidised by another full-time occupation. It was widely assumed, from his writings, that Bywater was a grinder by trade. But although he had been apprenticed to a blade maker, he became a druggist, the successful proprietor of two shops in Sheffield. Similarly, Bywater’s contemporary Charles Rogers (1802-1874) was a house painter, paperhanger and gilder, and continued in this trade while earning considerable regional and some national celebrity as ‘Tom Treddlehoyle’, author and illustrator of *The Bairnsla Foaks’ Annual an Pogmoor Olmenoc*, first issued in 1837 and continuing annually until his death,<sup>35</sup> when the Bradford periodical *The Yorkshireman* offered an appraisal of his life and work.

... we gat agate o’ talkin’ abaht t’deeth o’ poor Tom Treddlehoyle (Mr Rogers of Barnsley), an’ we, one an’ all, were varry sorry, for Tom hed leeten’d monny a hahr for us i’ times goan by. He wor t’ father o’ Yorkshire dialect Almanacks, an’ though he wor nobbut a poor hand at makkin’ poetry he’d more real wit in him nor any hawf dozen o’ t’ Almanack chaps ‘ats sprung up sin. <sup>36</sup>

This is confirmation that while Abel Bywater had pioneered the use of Yorkshire dialect as a vehicle for trenchant political, social and religious comment but had few outright imitators, Rogers set the template for the comic dialect almanac that would become an expression of regional cultural identity that was almost peculiar to Yorkshire.

Maureen Perkins has shown that the inspiration for the nineteenth-century comic almanac can be found in *Poor Robin’s*, a ribald parody of astrological almanacs that began publication in London in 1662 and continued until 1828.<sup>37</sup> A central motif of *Poor Robin’s* was ‘the simple man who knew better than those richer and higher on the social scale’. This theme of ‘simple folks’ wisdom ‘was taken up by the dialect almanacs of the North East [sic], which, by frequently making the ‘wise fool’ of a Northerner confronted with the corrupt sophistication of London, contributed to the cultural differentiation of north from south’.<sup>38</sup> Cultural differentiation there was, but as we shall see when we encounter John Hartley’s stock ‘Yorkshireman at large’ figure, the dialect authors were not always so self-

34 Abel Bywater, *T’Shevvilder* (Sheffield, published for the author by J. Robertshaw, n/d, [1857 suggested]), npn

35 This almanac did resume for a time after Rogers’s death, edited by Isaac Binns until it finally ceased in 1883. Later editions saw the spelling of the title amended to *Bairnsla Folks’ Annual and Pogmoor Almanac*.

36 *YM*, February 1875.

37 Perkins, *Visions of the Future*, p.124. Detailed information about *Poor Robin’s* can also be found in Capp, *English Almanacs*.

38 *Ibid.*, p.122.

satisfied as Perkins implies.

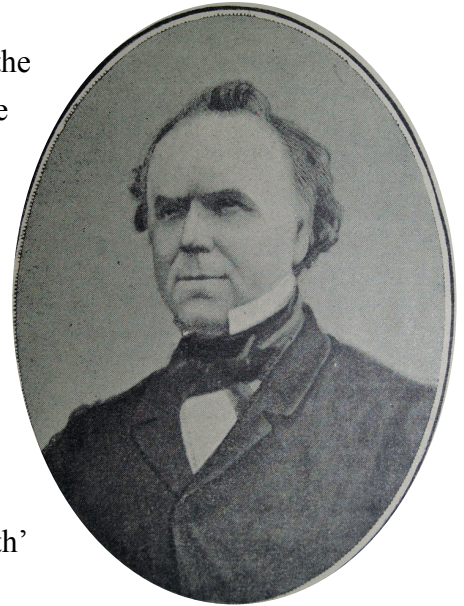
A feature of *Poor Robin's* that was carried over into the Yorkshire almanacs was its use of a preface in which the author communicated directly and on equal terms with the readers, often discussing his personal affairs and the mechanics of almanac production. When employed by Hartley in particular, this would be an effective means of forming a frank relationship with a loyal base of readers. In 1898 he apologised to 'them kind, well-meanin fowk who keep sendin me ther contributions for insertin' i'th' Clock'. He wrote that he was tempted to 'mak use o' this stuff 'at nivver cost me a thowt, but th' publishers willn't have it; - they say 'at they pay me for writin' it, an' therefore it's my duty to do soa'.<sup>39</sup>

Charles Rogers [Figure 4], creator of *The Bairnsla Foaks' Annual*, was born in Manchester but moved to Wakefield as a boy and was educated at its Green Coat School before beginning his apprenticeship as a painter, paperhanger and gilder at the age of 14, moving to Barnsley.<sup>40</sup> Before turning to dialect literature he earned some local fame as an artist and he would provide illustrations for his almanac, the most effective being small engravings imbued with visual humour [Figure 5]. The early editions of the almanac had lengthy, unstandardised titles, such as *Sum Thowts abaght Nan Bent's Tea Party*, *Bairnsla Feasten*, *A Owd Maid's Pocket*, and *Tom Treddlehoyle's Lament; also a Characteristic a Bairnsla, be Crispin Merrybrain, Hisquire, a Sod Hall Park*. By 1839 it was simply the *Bairnsla Foaks' Annual*, *An ony body els-as beside... be Tom Treddlehoyle*. In 1843 it settled down as *The Bairnsla Foaks' Annual and Pogmoor Olmenock*.

Pogmoor is a hamlet close to Barnsley, which in the first half of the nineteenth century was mainly occupied by linen weavers. It had and still has a Tom Treddlehoyle Inn – its name a reference to the treadles used by the weavers. Rogers, adopting 'Tom Treddlehoyle' as his pseudonym, would refer to the 'City of Pogmoor' and claim that the astronomical elements of his almanac had been procured at the Pogmoor Observatory 'be authority a t'Man i' t'Mooiin'. In a typical flight of virtuosic verbal fancy, Treddlehoyle wrote that during his astronomical activities he had

raik't fire it sun, done't we Venus, hed a bit a baccy we Vulcan, swept arran webs aght at skye chamber wit tail ov a comet, shaiv'd mesen wi Time's scythe; sew'd Jupiter hiz buttons on we fork-leeting for ten year; bolted Jove aght ov his awn hause; slutterr'd daan t'side at gloab inta kaos; frizzald a red herrin' it frunt at mornin star...riddan a hundard mile upan a whirlwind...<sup>41</sup>

Treddlehoyle's address would be given as 'North Powl Cassal, City a Pogmoor'. Fictitious,



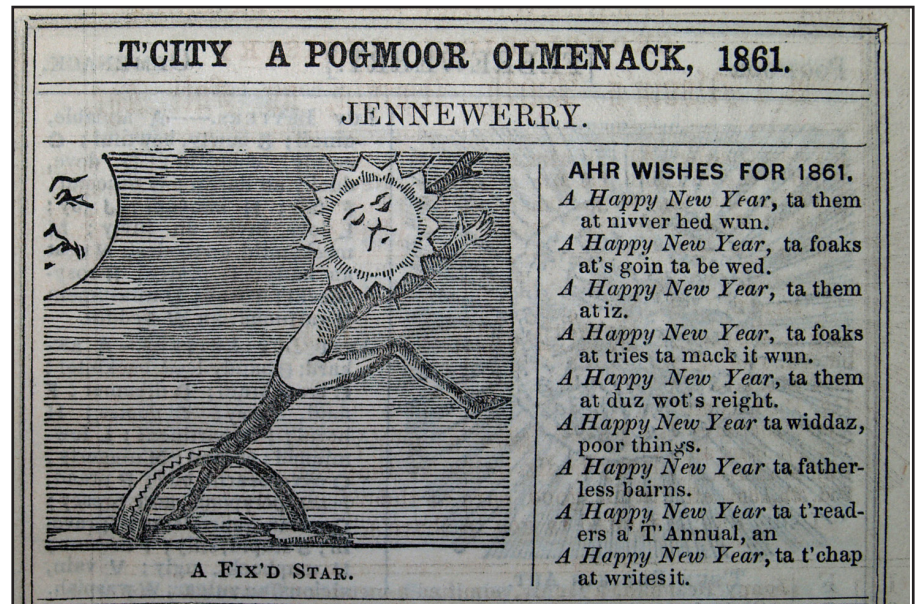
**Figure 4:** Charles Rogers, alias Tom Treddlehoyle, author and illustrator of the *Bairnsla Foaks' Annual an Pogmoor Olmenoc*. From *Old Yorkshire*, new series, Vol 3 (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1891)

39 John Hartley, *The Original Clock Almanack 1898* (Wakefield: Nicholson, 1897), p.2.

40 An account of Rogers's life, written by A. Paterson, appears in William Smith (ed), *Old Yorkshire*, new series, Vol 3 (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1891), 112-117.

41 From 'Tom's Letter to Prince Olbert' in *Tom Treddlehoyle's Trip ta Lunnan ta see Paxton's Great Glass Lantern* (Leeds: Alice Mann, n/d, presumed 1851 or 1852).

**Figure 5:** Words and pictures by Charles Rogers, of the *Bairnsla Foaks' Annual an Pogmoor Olmenoc*.



often absurdist events in Pogmoor, such as the opening of a New Leg Shop, were solemnly reported. Inflating the significance of an insignificant hamlet was a continual element of Rogers's humour and he would make a show of taking a wry pride in his locality.

*Theaze Lunan chaps sez t'River Tems  
 Duz like an Oashan flow;  
 But what iz that ta Naizbra Dyke  
 Or yot ta River Souh?*<sup>42</sup>

The almanac itself was set out in a conventional grid pattern, with all of the text, including the names of months, rendered in dialect. Rogers offers absurd anniversaries – 15 May is commemorated as the day on which his cat was killed in 1840 – and preposterous prognostications on the weather – ‘If it snaws all-day ta day t’graand al be white; nah just tack noatis’. He mocks the gardening hints that were a feature of conventional almanacs by stating that a particular day is the one on which to ‘destroy all slugs’ or ‘now is the time that ants wake up’.

The verbal and visual inventiveness of Rogers ensured that his almanac enjoyed a regional following and had a wider circulation. Early editions were issued by various Barnsley printers, including J. Ray, described as a ‘bookseller, stationer and hatter’, but by 1844 it was published by Alice Mann in Leeds, began to carry larger amounts of advertising and showed signs of seeking a wider Yorkshire readership. The *Bairnsla Fowks' Annual* also credited publishers in Manchester and London. As early as 1843 the almanac was being advertised widely throughout the North of England and evidence can be assembled to show that it was being read further afield.<sup>43</sup> Humorous conceits devised for Yorkshire consumption thus found more widespread favour.

42 ‘Lines e defence on az awn taane-like’, *Bairnsla Foaks' Annual...fort year of Our Lord 1840*, p.11.

43 For example, *The Liverpool Mercury*, 2 June 1843 carried a front page advertisement for the *Bairnsla Foaks' Annual* and on 29 September the same newspaper printed a letter, written in dialect, from a reader in Shrewsbury, responding humorously to Tom Treddlehoyle's weather observations. On 5 December, 1846, *The Preston Guardian* carried an excerpt from the current *Bairnsla Foaks' Annual*. On 30 December 1846, the *Derby Mercury* published *Tom Treddlehoyle's New Wetherogical Table*. On 10 August 1855, *The Times* of London included an advertisement for one of Charles Rogers's ‘spin off’ publication, *A Visit ta t'Great French Exhibition*, by Tom Treddlehoyle.



#### 4. The almanac boom

CHARLES Rogers, alias Tom Treddlehoyle, established a template for the Yorkshire comic almanac, but he had few imitators until the mid-1850s. The almanac tax had been withdrawn in 1834 but advertising duty was not fully repealed until 1853 and a tax on paper remained until 1861. Using the list of dialect almanacs and annuals furnished above, it can be seen that three publications appeared in the period 1855-60. There were nine during the 1860s but the biggest period of concentrated growth was 1870-1875, when nine publications came on the market, with four new almanacs/annuals in the latter half of the decade. The end of the century saw a rapid decline. Hartley's *Clock* was one of few nineteenth-century Yorkshire dialect almanacs to survive into the new century, although 1906 saw the appearance in Bradford of Bob Stubbs' *Original Yorksher Awmynack*, written by William Saville until his death in 1920 [Figure 6].<sup>44</sup> The phenomenon of the Yorkshire dialect almanac, then, largely belongs to last quarter of the nineteenth century, with origins in the 1830s. A steady growth, or even a boom in production during the 1860s-70s suggests a rise in regional self-awareness, self-celebration and cultural self-determination at this period, followed by a decline in these things at the end of the century, mirrored by a falling away in the quantity of dialect almanacs on the market. Equally, it could be suggested that the nostalgic element in dialect almanacs was less in tune with the times. Mandler has argued that by the late nineteenth century, urban culture was more populist, commercial and present-minded.<sup>45</sup> The almanacs were populist and commercial – or attempted to be – but were a vestige of the past.

The post-Bywater and Rogers almanacs were concentrated in the textile areas of the West Riding. Many of the publications were intensely focussed on their locale and its trade and written in a dense dialect that probably militated against a wider circulation and a longer life. A good example is *T'Bishop Blaize Olmenoc*, described as 't'annewal remembrancer tut our own Bishop be t'sapplers, sorters, combers, spinners, weivers an t'milners o'Bradforth'. Written by 'Bill o'Jacks Esq, Benk Fooit House, Wibsa', priced at 'wun penny' and published by William Cooke of Bradford, it appeared just once, in 1858. Apart from advertisements, the entire almanac is written in dialect, with an orthography

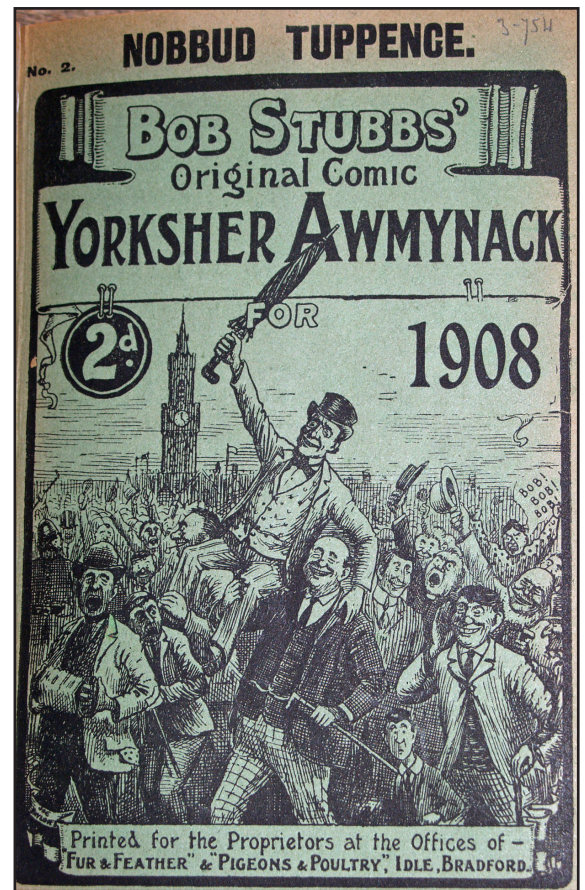


Figure 6: An early-twentieth century entry into the almanac field.

Bradford Libraries and Information Service

<sup>44</sup> Publication was suspended during the First World War.

<sup>45</sup> Mandler, 'Against "Englishness"', 160. He aligns his argument with that of José Harris, who detected 'the unique dominance of the present-time' in the late-nineteenth century – *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, p.33.



that can be hard-going but represents an almost defiant sense of local and regional pride in cultural identity.

It furst plaise let me kongratewlait yu awl, that t'kindum ov Bradforth, t'kantee ov Wibsa, and awl t'sitteez, burrahz, tahns, villidges, and hamlets thearin sittewaited, hezzant bin bernt up by t'Kmoot [comet], nut onnee ov ahr inhabeetantz nock'd at heead by it, ur suffokaifred be t'black damp ov it...<sup>46</sup>

All creators and consumers of dialect almanacs would have learned literacy skills in Standard English. Whatever their customary speech pattern, to write and to read in strong dialect would have required an extra degree of initial effort. The fact that this effort was deemed worthwhile indicated a need to celebrate local and regional identity and to enter a world close to that of the reader 'in plot, conversation and character'.<sup>47</sup> It must be assumed that typesetters – whether they worked for printing companies or newspapers and periodicals which included dialect material – developed facility at coping with non-standard orthography. The pioneering Abel Bywater had initial difficulty finding publishers and printers who could read and typeset his material.<sup>48</sup>

The burgeoning popular literary culture that became evident in centres such as Bradford and Halifax played a part in advancing the dialect movement. The literary clubs attended by James Burnley in 1860s Bradford were described in Chapter 4. Burnley, who was a catalytic figure in almost all aspects of later-nineteenth century Yorkshire regional literary culture, also became a dialect almanac writer. Using his nom-de-plume 'Saunterer', he produced what was possibly the most sophisticated of these publications – *Saunterer's Satchel and West Riding Almanac*, which first appeared in 1874.<sup>49</sup> *Saunterer's Satchel* was written in dialect and standard English in about equal proportion. Burnley, in the first of his prefaces written in a form of prose with internal rhymes, stated his intention to furnish a 'garland of songs dialectical, to keep up the tongue which our forefathers sung at festival, banquet and spectacle'.<sup>50</sup>

The following year, he amplified on this, making it plain that those with no yen for dialect could skip to the material in Standard English. Perhaps he was reassuring some of his readers that a sense of Yorkshireness was not entirely dependent on speech patterns.

I love our great county, its worth and its bounty, and I love its grand, homely old speech for its true Saxon ring and those sounds that will bring all the past within memory's reach. Of this dialect then, I've permitted my pen to give several stray illustrations, and, maybe, the critic, with pen analytic, will scan the rude pieces with patience. If he cannot, why then let him turn to the pages where he will discern the language that he himself fancies; and there if he find what is more to his mind, my pleasure he greatly enhances.<sup>51</sup>

Despite his enthusiasm for writing in Yorkshire dialect, Burnley plainly regarded it as a vestige of the past that had consciously to be preserved. It was widely believed that the Education Act of 1870 was a death knell for dialect. This was a concern that persisted for several decades, which perhaps suggests that dialect was more robust than feared.<sup>52</sup>

46 From the Preface to *T'Bishop Blaize Olmenac 1858* (Bradford: William Cooke, 1857).

47 Vicinus, *Industrial Muse*, p.190.

48 Middleton, *Memoir of Abel Bywater*, in Bywater, *Sheffield Dialect*, p.ix.

49 In 1875-76, Burnley also wrote *The Clock Almanack*, during John Hartley's first spell in the United States.

50 *Saunterer's Satchel and West Riding Almanac 1875* (Bradford: Thomas Brear, 1874), p.2

51 *Saunterer's Satchel and West Riding Almanac 1876* (Bradford: Thomas Brear, 1875), p.2

52 In the late 1930s, John Lexow Bruff was still lamenting that the 'homely Doric' of Yorkshire folk was

*Saunterer's Satchel* followed the almanac template, with its calendar and astronomical information, but used the format in some ingenious ways. For example Burnley pulls off a literary *coup de theatre* for the months of September and October, 1877. Alongside the calendar for the former month he places a 10-verse poem in standard English entitled *Bad Times (Up at the Hall)* in which a Bradford industrialist alternates between flaunting his wealth and complaining about his workers.

*They run the wages up, you know,  
When there's demand for worsted pieces,  
But cutting down they won't allow,  
When trade decreases.*

*Who's that now driving up? Vangrave?  
I've bought a Turner of him. Seen it?  
You shall. The working man's a knave,  
And cannot screen it.*

*He now will have to eat the leek,  
And learn the lessons of his folly.  
We go to Italy next week;  
Won't it be jolly?<sup>53</sup>*

Over the page, adjacent to the October calendar is a parallel poem, *Bad Times (Down at the Cottage)*, which concludes:

*I hed my spree; bud that wor nowt  
To t'sprees 'at went on up at mayster's!  
Bud do they stop em nah? If owt  
They've more sich gay stirs.*

*He made his profit aht o'me,  
An'sich as me, an' heaped up brass, lad,  
Bud nah, he'd nawther speyk nor see,  
If he'd to pass, lad*

*It's hard, most hard! Good God! What's up?  
Mary hez fainted! T'barns is cryin'!  
Bring me some wotter! Come, lass, sup.  
Oh heavens! She's dyin!<sup>54</sup>*

The paired poems are an example of the manner in which the Yorkshire almanacs could be used for the purposes of comment arising from the particular social and economic landscape of the county. Abel Bywater had used his dialect productions to engage in national moral and religious debate. His successors were more inwardly focussed. The two 'Bad Times' poems also show that by the 1870s the wealthier Yorkshire industrialists were deemed to speak in a deregionalised upper class drawl.

James Burnley consciously blended standard and dialect English in *Saunterer's Satchel*. John Hartley, although his reputation was purely as a dialect writer, did the same. But it was the norm for Yorkshire almanacs to restrict themselves to one mode or the other and the county produced its quotient of conventional almanacs that included historical

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'now in dire straits to hold its own against board schools' and other features of modern life - Introduction to *Dialect Poems and Prose by Thomas Blackah of Greenhow Hill* (York: Waddingtons, 1937).

53 Verses 1, 9, 10 of 'Bad Times (Up at the Hall)', adjacent to September in *Saunterer's Satchel and West Riding Almanac 1877* (Bradford, Thomas Brear, 1876).

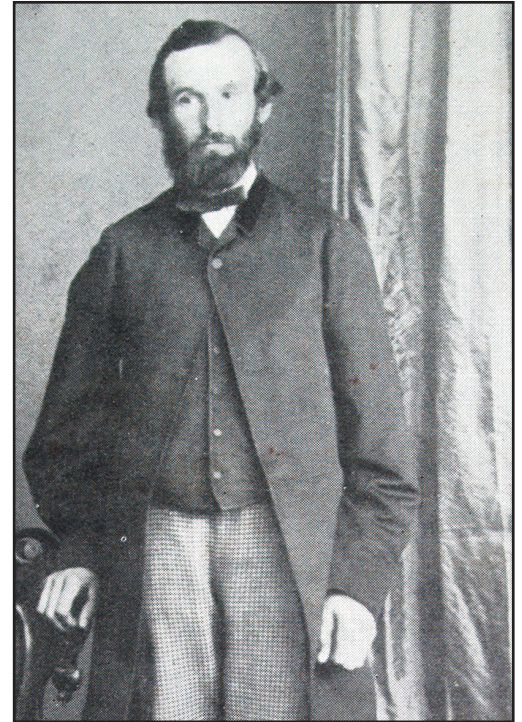
54 Verses 5, 6, 10 of 'Bad Times (Down at the Cottage)', *ibid.*, October.

material and data about local municipal affairs. Astrological almanacs with predictive content also emanated from Yorkshire – the Otley firm William Walker and Sons published a version of *Old Moore's National Weather Almanac* from the 1840s until well into the twentieth century. One Yorkshire almanac made a transition from a highly conventional publication in Standard English to one of the most ribald and linguistically uncompromising of dialect publications. *The Nidderdale Almanack and Year Book of Useful Knowledge*, as it was titled when first issued in 1864, was also unusual in that it emanated from the essentially agricultural area of Pateley Bridge. In its fourth year of publication, the almanac's content was still mostly in Standard English but its title became *The Nidderdale Oliniac an' Ivvery Body's Kalendar for 1867*. By 1868, most of the content was in dialect and in 1869 it was announced that 'all t'lot's cumpiled, composed, skrewed up an fasen'd doon by Nattie Nydds'.

This was the pseudonym of Thomas Blackah (1828-1895 [Figure 7]), sometimes dubbed 'The Miners' Poet'.<sup>55</sup> He was descended from several generations of lead miners and followed the trade himself, which renders him one of the most authentically working-class of dialect writers, although the occupational pattern of lead mining in North Yorkshire was that miners would bargain with agents for a promising spot and work the seam on their own account. Therefore, Blackah, in common with the likes of Bywater, Rogers, Burnley and Hartley, was essentially self-employed, giving him scope to develop his literary career. It was only when the price of lead dropped in the 1880s that Blackah and his family migrated to Leeds to seek industrial work and the *Nidderdale Oliniac* ceased publication.<sup>56</sup> In 1869 it had claimed a circulation of between 8,000 and 10,000 and in 1870 it carried a review from the *Harrogate Herald* stating that the almanac was 'one of the raciest and [most] mirth-provoking of its kind'. It was a rumbustuous publication, claiming that it contained:

...matter ta sute all Classes, ta be fun atween Chowbent and Hee Feeak Yat - atween t'Land's End i' Cornwall an' Jonny Groats i' Scotland – the grave, the gay- the learn'd, the unlearn'd – the wash'd, the unwash'd – the fallible, the infallible - the temperate, the intemperate, ather i'drink er owt else; the teetollaer, the beer drinker & c &c<sup>57</sup>

Blackah, inspired by Charles Rogers, carried preposterous weather forecasts which mocked



**Figure 7:** Thomas Blackah, alias Nattie Nydds, author of the *Nidderdale Oliniac*. From *Dialect Poems and Prose by Thomas Blackah of Greenhow Hill* (1937). Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

<sup>55</sup> His anthologies, such as *Songs and Poems in the Nidderdale Dialect* (1874) were ascribed to 'T.Blackah, a Working Miner'.

<sup>56</sup> For an outline of Blackah's life and career see Bruff, Introduction to *Dialect Poems and Prose by Thomas Blackah of Greenhow Hill*.

<sup>57</sup> *Nidderdill Olminiac an' Ivvery Body's Kalendar for 1870* (Pateley Bridge: T.Thorpe, 1869), title page.



the predictive pretensions of the astrological almanacs, and although the *Nidderdil* retained the calendar grid layout, Blackah muscled this aside. For example, in the 1871 edition the editorial space adjacent to the months from September to December was filled with a continuous poem about the antics of a pair of Nidderdale drunkards named Dazzler and Sogg. The names of the church festivals as they occurred in the calendar were impiously interpolated into this narrative.

The *Nidderdil Olminack* was published in Pateley Bridge by Thomas Thorpe, who was the composer and author of hymns and the editor of a volume entitled *Lyrics, Sanctuses, Doxologies, Chants and Psalms*. It must be assumed that his commercial instincts overrode his religiosity and he recognised the sales potential of a racy dialect publication written by a local poet. By the late 1860s, the dialect almanac had become something of a craze in Yorkshire, a defining feature of the county's populist cultural identity. And by this time the career of John Hartley was underway.

## 5. John o' th' Clock

WHEN John Hartley gave a recitation at Sion School, Halifax, in December 1898, a local reporter provided a description of his 'rather slight frame', his brushed back hair, long goatee beard and 'somewhat aquiline' features. This accords well with photographs of Hartley [e.g. *Figure 8*], in which he was shown to have had a distinctive, almost exotic



**Figure 8:** John Hartley, from a *Clock Almanack* advertisement for his recitations.

appearance. It is surprising then, that the reporter went on to state that Hartley's whole appearance was 'somehow typical of the West Riding'.<sup>58</sup> But, as the most widely read Yorkshire dialect writer, he was a symbol of the county's populist culture, deemed to have a special insight into the lives and social conditions of the working and lower-middle classes of the West Riding. This is despite the fact that Hartley spent a large proportion of his life away from Yorkshire, working with limited or mixed success at a wide range of occupations with an artistic dimension, including theatre management and upholstery design. He lived in Liscard, Cheshire, from the late 1890s until his death in 1915 and spent two periods in North America – in Canada in the early 1870s and from 1882 to 1894 in the United States, having some success in the carpet and upholstery business in Philadelphia until a bank failure forced him home to England for good. In 1890, *The Yorkshireman*, in an illustrated poem about Hartley, bestowed a dual identity by describing him

58 'A chat with the founder of the *Clock Almanack*', *Halifax Guardian*, 10 December 1898.



as a ‘Yorkshire Yankee swell’.<sup>59</sup> Hartley was born in Halifax in 1839, the son of a tea merchant. After school at Park Place Academy he trained as a pattern designer for a worsted firm. Artistic skills gained by Hartley later enabled him to provide illustrations for his publications. In his early twenties, Hartley began to attend the Beacon Club, a weekly gathering of literary and artistic types. In order to make a contribution to proceedings, and having been influenced by the Lancashire dialect poet Edwin Waugh, Hartley wrote his sentimental poem of social comment *Bite Bigger*, subsequently published as a penny broadside. It was a local bestseller and later widely anthologised.

In 1866 he was asked to take over as the author/editor of an almanac that a Halifax hat seller, Charles Wilson, had begun to publish.<sup>60</sup> Hartley’s literary career had begun, in tandem with that of recitalist, for which he earned considerable regional fame, if not fortune. ‘With the exception of Charles Dickens, no man was ever more successful than John Hartley at reading his own writings,’ according to one source, admittedly a publicity brochure for Hartley’s works.<sup>61</sup> *The Yorkshireman* had more qualified praise, being aware of the vagaries of Hartley’s career, describing him as ‘elocution’s slave and master’ who ‘Struts his hour of leisure well/ Heedless of all past disaster’.<sup>62</sup>

With only a short break in the early 1870s, Hartley wrote the *Clock Almanack* until his death and also produced some 52 ‘Yorkshire Tales’, issued as individual pamphlets and in collections. There were anthologies of stories and poems such as *Yorkshire Lyrics*, *Yorkshire Ditties* and *Yorksher Puddin’* and 12 novellas featuring the adventures of his stock character, a Bradford weaver named Sammywell Grimes and his formidable wife Mally. There were also projects such as *John Hartley’s Yorkshire Christmas Annual*. This large body of work was mostly published between the 1870s and 1890s by Nicholson’s of Wakefield (originally a Halifax firm), which also became the proprietors of the *Clock Almanack*, and much of it remained in print for several decades. After Nicholson’s folded in 1921, the Bradford firm Watmoughs, which had long been active in the field of dialect publication, took over the *Clock* and reissued much of Hartley’s back catalogue, so that it remained available well into the twentieth century. His work is still subject to occasional literary appraisal.

Hartley’s prolific writing brought him no financial security. He had signed over the copyright of some of his earlier work to its publisher and his share of the proceeds from the sale of threepenny almanacs, however widely circulated, was not great. He spent the last 20 years of his life in poverty. In 1909, the energetic Bradford poet, publisher and entrepreneur Charles F. Forshaw orchestrated a petition intended to secure a Civil List pension for Hartley. The attempt failed, but the petition was signed by an impressive number of regional establishment figures, divided into categories such as Members of Parliament, university professors, barristers and solicitors, ‘litterateurs’, clergymen,

59 ‘Picture Personalities’, *YM*, 23 April 1890.

60 Wilson conducted his business in premises on Corn Market, Halifax, distinguished by an illuminated clock. *The Halifax Original Illuminated Clock Almanack*, as it was first titled, appeared in 1865, initially edited by James Bland. Alongside local information and anniversaries it carried a number of poems, mainly written in Standard English, all of which turn out to be outrageous ‘puff’ pieces for Wilson’s hats.

61 Anon. brochure entitled *Works of John Hartley: The Most Famous Yorkshire Dialect Writer of all Time* (Bradford: Watmough, n/d).

62 ‘Picture Personalities’, *YM*, 23 April 1890.

accountants, Halifax and Bradford gentlemen, plus members of the Liverpool Yorkshire Society.<sup>63</sup>

The fact that Hartley was a freemason might have had a bearing on this level of support – C. F. Forshaw was a prominent mason, sometimes known as the Poet Laureate of Freemasonry – but there was also a widespread feeling that Hartley, so emblematic of Yorkshire regional culture, should not be let down and if he was, then this would reflect badly on the county. Substantial sums of money were raised for him at benefit dinners. James Burnley summed up this sense of regionalist pride and duty in a poem entitled *For John Hartley's Sake*.

*Come, lads, let's give a helping hand  
To John, old John, o' t' Clock;  
He's beaten down to life's rough strand.  
Let's shield him from its shock;  
For Yorkshire credit's sake let's see  
Him through this final lap.  
Let's cheer him up an' set him free  
From poverty's mishap.*

*Your mites send in, your shillings, pounds,  
Don't falter, I implore,  
For John has passed life's fighting bounds,  
His years are seventy-four;  
For old times sake, for times that live,  
For Yorkshire's good old name,  
Let us in hearty concert give  
This guerdon to his fame*

*Yorkshire, so wealthy and so great,  
Of Yorkshire genius proud,  
Can't leave her poet to this fate  
Of want, and care, and cloud;  
So little can so much assuage,  
Oh help, friends, ere he's gone;  
With comfort let us crown the age  
Of dear old, good old John*

*So here's my offering, here's my call,  
Let all of Yorkshire birth  
Respond with tribute great and small  
To honour Yorkshire worth.<sup>64</sup>*

There are several short biographical sketches of Hartley.<sup>65</sup> Some contemporary scholars have appraised his role in the regional, auto-didactic, industrial and populist culture of the late nineteenth century.<sup>66</sup> For the purposes of the present study, it must be asked how

63 In Charles F. Forshaw, *John Hartley, Poet and Author: An Appreciation* (Bradford: Thornton and Pearson, 1909), pp.19-23.

64 From James Burnley, 'For John Hartley's Sake', in Chas F. Forshaw, *Some Yorkshire Poets: A Lecture* (Bradford: Forshaw, 1914), pp.11-12.

65 In addition to newspaper articles already cited, sources drawn on here include Forshaw, *John Hartley, Poet and Author: An Appreciation*; W.J.Halliday, 'John Hartley' in *Transactions of The Yorkshire Dialect Society*, Part XXXX, Vol VI (1939), pp. 27-34; J.H.Waddington, 'John Hartley of Almanack Fame', *Hebden Bridge Times*, 13 October, 1939; anon. brochure entitled *Works of John Hartley: The Most Famous Yorkshire Dialect Writer of all Time* (Bradford: Watmough, n/d); John A.Hargreaves, 'Hartley, John (1839-1915)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/67922>, accessed 5 November 2009]

66 For example, Walker, "'My Native Twang'" [the title of a poem by Hartley]; Vicinus, *Industrial Muse*, pp.197-199; Joyce, *Visions of the People*, chapters 11 and 12; Stephen Wade, *In My Own Shire; Region and*

much Hartley's popular and widely disseminated writings reflected or helped to construct Yorkshire's regional identity.

Hartley frequently expressed pride in Yorkshire and its supposed characteristics, never more extravagantly than in a *Clock Almanack* poem of 1890. This would have been written towards the end of Hartley's residence in the USA, so absence might have made the heart grow even fonder:

*Bonny Yorksher! How aw love thee  
Hard and rugged tho thy face is; -  
Ther's a honest air abaat thi,  
Aw ne'er find i' other places  
Ther's a mewsic i' thi lingo,  
Spreads a charm o'er hill an valley; -  
As a drop ov Yorkshire stingo,  
Warms and cheers a body's bally.  
There's no pooasies 'at smell sweeter;  
Nor thy modest moorland blossom,  
Th' violet's e'en ne'er shone aght breeter  
Nor on thy green mossy bosom.  
Hillsides dect wi' purple heather;  
Guard thy dales where plenty dwellin  
Hand in hand wi' Peace, together  
Tales ov sweet contentment telling.  
On the scroll of fame an Glory,  
Names ov Yorkshire heroes glisten;  
History tells no grander stooary,  
An it thrills me as aw listen.  
Young men blest wi' brain an muscle,  
Swarm i' village, taan an city,  
Nah as then, prepared to tussle,  
Wi the brave, the wise or witty.  
An thy lasses – faithful – peerless –  
Matchless i' ther bloom an beauty–  
Modest, lovin, brave an fearless.  
Praad ov Hooam an firm to Duty.  
Aw've met nooan I' other places,  
Can a cannal hold beside em;  
Rich i' charms an winnin graces  
(Aw should know becoss aw've tried em!)*<sup>67</sup>

The poem – with a roguish pay-off line that was one of Hartley's hallmarks – includes several key words and phrases that had been central to Yorkshire identity, such as 'rugged', 'honest' and 'fearless'. The young men possess both brain and muscle, enabling them to tussle physically and verbally with supercilious outsiders. The physical glory of Yorkshire is in its hills, valleys and heather. In common with most Yorkshire writers of the period, Hartley could find little or nothing to admire in the industrial or urban scene. In a mock tourist guide to his home town, he wrote that

climbin' th' hill, you may see a lot of Factories cloise at hand, for young fowk to work in wol they grow old, an' a long way i' th distance may be seen a lot of almshouses for old fowk to dee in an' yo may hear moor screamin' factory whistles nor wod mak a steam organ for Pandemonium.<sup>68</sup>

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*Belonging in British Writing, 1840-1970* (London: Praeger, 2002), chapter 4. The most recent anthology of Hartley's work is John Waddington-Feather (ed.), *The Best of John Hartley* (Otley: Watersgill, 2007).

67 From John Hartley, 'Bonny Yorkshire' in *The Original Clock Almanack 1890* (Wakefield: Nicholson, 1889), p.4.

68 John Hartley, *The Original Clock Almanack 1872* (Halifax: Wilson, 1870), p.17.

In his dialect poems expressing Yorkshire exceptionalism, Hartley could stray towards smug self-regard. But he was often gently subversive. In 1881 he signed himself as ‘A Plain, Blunt Yorkshireman who means weel, even when he misses it’.<sup>69</sup> When his stock character Grimes visited Paris, he commented that:

...ther’s one thing ‘at aw dooant believe ony Frenchman can do, an’ that is, slouch along th’ street wi his hands in his pockets like a thoroughbred Yorksherman! Even them at’s huggin loads o’ boxes an’ hampers o’ ther rig (sich loads as a Yorksher chap ud stand an’ louk at wol somdy went an’ fotched a horse an’ cart) trip away as if they’d somewhear to goa...<sup>70</sup>

A light-hearted poem of 1879 is another summation of Yorkshire characteristics in which a hint of self-mockery can be detected behind the conventional sentiments:

*Awm a rooamin, rollickin’ Yorksher lad  
Aw tak things as they come,  
An tho mi bargains turn ‘aght bad  
Yo’ll never find me glum.  
Aw’ve joys ‘at they neer know nowt on,  
An’ when they think me sad,  
Awm ommost fit to split wi’ fun,  
For awm a Yorksher lad*

*Aw love mi lass, aw love my glass,  
Aw love all honest men.  
It’s true they’re rather scarce, but still  
One turns up nah and then.  
Aw love to grip ther honest hand,  
Tho it’s as hard as horn,  
For awm ther mate, what’er ther state  
If they’re but Yorksher born.<sup>71</sup>*

Despite such sentiments, John Hartley’s popularity was based less on his outbursts of Yorkshire patriotism than on his ruefully humorous or sentimental evocations of life for working-class and lower-middle class people in the urban West Riding. Hartley was Liberal in his politics. His 1878 book *Many a Slip* was dedicated to the long-serving Halifax Liberal MP James Stansfield ‘as a small token of my esteem and admiration for his talents and consistency so markedly displayed during the many years he has represented my native town in Parliament’.<sup>72</sup> But Hartley’s radicalism probably outstripped that of his MP. There are many examples in his writings of indignation at social inequalities. When his Bradford weaver Sammywell Grimes witnesses a parade of aristocrats in Hyde Park, he is moved to utter a short poem:

*Aw can’t tell why a child ‘at’s born  
To lord, or lady that  
Should be sooa worshipp’d, wol they scorn  
A poor man’s little brat.*

*Aw can’t tell why a workin’ man  
Should wear his life away,  
Wol maisters grasp at all they can  
An’ grudge a chap his pay.<sup>73</sup>*

69 John Hartley, Preface, *The Original Clock Almanack 1881* (Wakefield: Nicholson, 1880).

70 John Hartley, *Seets i’ Paris* (Wakefield: Nicholson, 1878), p.38.

71 John Hartley, Preface, *The Original Clock Almanack 1879* (Wakefield: Nicholson, 1878).

72 John Hartley, *Many a Slip* (London: W.Nicholson, 1878). This book is a 313-page novel written in a stilted Standard English, with little or no sense of regional location.

73 John Hartley, *Seets i’ Lundun, A Yorkshireman’s Ten Days’ Trip* (Wakefield: Nicholson, [1876]), p.64.



On occasions the *Clock Almanack* itself would make barbed class references. The 1877 edition, for the month of September, comments that

this is th'tiem when 'Fortune's Favoured few' enjoy thersen. A bit o' gooid shooitin is fine spooart, but at this day it's nobbut gentlemen an' game keepers 'at can indulge in it; an' th' warst on it is, 'at what they do shooit seldom finds its way on to a poor man's table.<sup>74</sup>

Hartley's literary career had been launched by the poem entitled *Bite Bigger*, which described an encounter with two street urchins scavenging for food. The opening story in his 1876 collection *Yorksher Puddin'* was 'Frozen to Death', which tells of two child factory workers who, being late for work, are refused admittance and consequently freeze in a snowstorm outside the factory gates. Although plainly intended to prick consciences, Hartley's political ambivalence emerges at the end of the story. The moral would appear to be that children should not be required to do factory work at all, but the middle class narrator of the tale – told at a Christmas party – states, with some bathos, that, 'It might not be wrong to require them to do so but it would at least show a desire on the part of the employers to ameliorate the hardness of their lot if, while endeavouring to enforce strict punctuality, they would provide some shelter for those who, having come from a distance, fail to arrive in time for their admission'.<sup>75</sup> The sentence is a good example of the stilted nature of Hartley's Standard English prose.<sup>76</sup> He became a more impassioned, politically committed person when he wrote in Yorkshire dialect.

Despite his 1878 dedication to the local MP, Hartley evinced frequent scepticism about the Parliamentary system, even after the extension of the franchise, and in 1880 published an eight-verse *Song for Hard Times*, which concludes:

An ther's one matter moor 'at aw cannot but mention,  
For it points aght a moral 'at shouldn't be missed.  
Can't yo see ha' they use ivvery aid an invention  
To grind daan yor weage when yo cannot resist?  
If yo' strike they dooan't care, for yor forced to knock under,  
Yore net able to live if they stop off yor pay.  
Will it bring workin men to ther senses aw wonder.  
That's a nooation aw gained as aw went in mi way.  
  
Some are lukkin for help to Gladstone or Dizzy,  
An pinning ther faith to pet parliament men.  
But to feight ther own battles keeps them all too busy  
An if help's what we want we must look to ussen.  
If we're blessed wi' gooid health an' have brains, boosan and muscle  
An' keep a brave heart, we shall yet win the day  
An' be stronger an wiser for havin this tussle,  
That's a nooation aw gained as aw went on mi way.<sup>77</sup>

The 'tussle' referred to a self-sufficient struggle against poverty rather than a call to arms

74 John Hartley, *The Original Illuminated Clock Almanack 1877* (Bradford: W.M. Byles & Son, 1876), p.21.

75 John Hartley, *Yorksher Puddin'* (orig. published 1876; edition used here Bradford: Watmoughs. n/d), p.24.

76 Hartley wrote more material in Standard English that commentators on his work generally allow. In addition to fairly frequent poems in Standard English in the *Clock Almanack* and in collections such as his *Christmas Annual*, he wrote the anthology *Pensive Poems and Startling Stories* (Wakefield: Nicholson, 1876), the novels *Many a Slip* and *A Rolling Stone* (both Wakefield: Nicholson, 1878), and an anthology of romantic and nature poems *A Sheaf from the Moorland* (Wakefield: Nicholson, 1880).

77 Verses six and eight, 'Song for Hard Times' in John Hartley, *The Original Illuminated Clock Almanack 1880* (Wakefield: W.Nicholson; London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1879), p.49.

against employers and the upper class. Hartley was not advocating revolution; indeed one of his recurrent themes was that people should make the best of their lot in life. His 1869 poem *Aght O'Wark* is filled with indignation at the heartlessness of the wealthy during an economic downturn, but it concludes with the sentiment that...

*...they say there is One 'at can see,  
An, has promised to guide us safe through;  
Soa aw'll live on i'hopes, an'surelee,  
He'll find a chap summat to do.<sup>78</sup>*

His 'philosophy' was a mixture of pessimism and stoicism and was expressed in frequent homilies.

Aw've heard tell o' fowk bein able to luk back wi' pleasure at a weel spent life, but aw dooant believe it, for th' best life 'at wor ivver spent bi'mortal i' this world, has been soa thickly dotted wi' neglects an' mistakes 'at ther's been moor reason for regrets nor for pleasure or pride.<sup>79</sup>

.. th' safest plan is to mak' th' best o' th' present, wastin' noa time i' deploring what's past, nor indulgin' unsarted hooapps for th' future... Things 'at disappoint us mooast are oft for as gooid.<sup>80</sup>

If you want to enjoy yoursen, yo mun be weel prepared for whatever may turn up, soa lig in a stock o'patience, a bit o' forbearance, a lump o'indulgence an' a gooid huggin' o' detarmination to be pleased'.<sup>81</sup>

In the first *Clock Almanack* to which he contributed, Hartley's poem entitled 'Waivin' [i.e 'weaving'] Mewsic' used textile trade metaphors – such as references to warp and weft – that would resonate with much of his readership, and he introduced an element of religiosity (God is represented as a celestial 'taker in') into what would become his familiar message of stoic self-reliance:

*If warp comes throo Heaven, th' weft's faand bi us sen,  
To finish a piece we'er compell'd to ha booath,  
Th' warps reight, but if th' weft should be faulty, how then?  
Noa waiver i'th' world can produce a gooid clooath;  
Then let us endeavour by working an' striving,  
To finish awr piece so's noa fault can be fun,  
An' then i'return for awr pains an' contriving,  
Th' taker in'll reward us and whisper well done.  
CHORUS:  
Clink a clank, clink a clank.  
Working witha at a thank  
May be awr fortune, if soa nivver mind it.  
Striving to do awr best,  
We shall be reight at last.  
If we lack comfort now, then we shall find it.<sup>82</sup>*

The purpose of providing a sequence of Hartley's homilies is not to suggest that he was a philosopher of note, but he was one of the most widely read Yorkshire writers of his lifetime, and held in great affection. Therefore, the outlook on life expressed in his poetry and prose can be regarded as a component of regional identity during this period. A constructivist model would suggest that he imbued his readership with these attitudes; a

78 John Hartley, final stanza 'Aght O'Wark', *The Original Illuminated Clock Almanack 1869* (Halifax: Walker, 1868), p.30.

79 John, Hartley, *The Original Illuminated Clock Almanack 1884* (Wakefield: Nicholson, 1883), p.2.

80 John, Hartley, *The Original Illuminated Clock Almanack 1877* (Bradford: W.M. Byles, 1876), p.5.

81 John, Hartley, *The Original Illuminated Clock Almanack 1872* (Halifax: Charles R. Wilson, 1871), p.5.

82 John Hartley, 'Weivin' Mewsic', *The Halifax Original Illuminated Clock Almanack, 1867* (Halifax: T.J. & F. Walker, 1866), p.33.



**Figure 9:** Standard cover illustration for John Hartley's *Clock Almanack*.

reflectionist model would mean that he mirrored attitudes that were already widespread. When Hartley's stoicism in the face of adversity is allied to his outbursts against social injustice, he can almost be taken as a personification of an industrial late-nineteenth century Yorkshire that was generally passive in the face of economic and social upheaval and yet also housed a tradition of radicalism and protest that would include such events as the seminal Manningham Mills strike and the formation of the Independent Labour Party.

## 6. Tykes at large

FROM its early editions to its end in 1956, the cover of *The Clock Almanack* included the same illustration [Figure 9], presumed to have been executed by John Hartley himself. It is a vivid study of a man – presumed to be the almanac author – seeking literary inspiration. On a lower stool to the right of the picture sits a bespectacled woman engrossed in reading what seems to be an almanac. On a wall behind, a picture hangs and this provided the only variable feature of the illustration, for the type on this picture would be altered every year to provide a product placement for whichever John Hartley publication, such as his *Yorkshire Tales* or *Seets i' Lundun*, was currently on the market.

On the floor there is a weaver's shuttle – the “attribute” of the man (to borrow a term from medieval religious art) and a pot is adjacent to the woman. It is probably a cooking utensil but possibly represents the pot for heating combs that was traditionally used in the worsted districts by hand woolcombers, a trade that had been completely superseded by machinery by the mid-century, but had been of considerable industrial and cultural significance.<sup>83</sup> The presence of at least one trade symbol reinforces the regional identity of the publication and there was also an element of the nostalgia, found in much Yorkshire literary production of the later-nineteenth century, for the domestic system of textile production. Joyce has pointed out that the Yorkshire almanacs in general showed how, among a mass audience, ‘a liberal idea of progress might go hand in hand with a powerful

83 See Burnley, *History of Wool and Woolcombing*.

and critical idealisation of the past'.<sup>84</sup> The overall suggestion of the *Clock Almanack* cover illustration is that the writer is, during the working day, a weaver by trade – whether in a factory or domestic context – and this is a reflection of the autodidactic, artisanal literary culture that Hartley exemplified. In the 1870s, the *Clock Almanack* illustration would have seemed reasonably contemporaneous – with memories of domestic textile production still fairly fresh – but as the decades passed it would be seen as increasingly quaint and nostalgic for an earlier mode of West Riding domesticity.

A fictional character who appeared regularly in *The Clock Almanack* was the Bradford weaver Sammywell Grimes, married to a formidable woman named Mally. Grimes was the narrator of a sequence of humorous novellas written by Hartley.<sup>85</sup> The invariable format was that Grimes would conceive the urge to travel to London, America, Paris etc, or carry out some project such as visiting the Queen. He manages to slip the leash and sets out, recording his misadventures in the form of letters or a journal. Grimes is either retired or, on one occasion, out of work because of a disagreement with his employer, but often refers to the fact that he has 'a pahnd or two', so he represents a relatively prosperous strand of working-class life, although his wife holds the purse strings.

Grimes was John Hartley's exemplar of a Yorkshireman at large in the wider world. But he was no canny, muscular Tyke who, after initial adversity, ran rings around foreigners or southerners. Grimes certainly had a pugnacious, assertive nature, but it was based on self-delusion. On his trip to London he painted the Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms on his trunk, confident that 'if onny Lunduner saw that 'Flea-an-a-fly-an-a-flitch-o'-bacon they'd nooan mell on it'.<sup>86</sup> But he was soon completely out of his depth, rescued from scrapes by Londoners or by a former Bradford colleague, now completely acclimatised to life in the capital. Similarly, when Grimes visited the USA he became completely dependent on an ingenious American who befriended him.

Hartley provided the cover illustrations for the Grimes series [Figure 10] and although the pictures show the limitations of his artistic technique, the depiction of the central character is significant. Sammywell Grimes is rather an ugly, bulbous-nosed man, sometimes sprouting stubble on his chin, wearing trousers that have to be turned up several

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84 Joyce, *Visions of the People*, p.288.

85 A list of the Grimes books, published by Nicholson's:  
*Seets I' Lundun : A Yorkshireman's Ten Days' Trip* (1876).  
*Seets I' Paris : Sammywell Grimes's Trip with His Old Chum Billy Baccus; His Opinion O'th' French, and Th' French Opinion O'th' Exhibition He Made Ov Hissen* (1878).  
*Seets I' Blackpool, Fleetwood, Lytham, and Southport : As Seen Bi Sammywell Grimes an' His Wife Mally on Their Hallidy Trip, Wi' a Few Incidents an' Accidents 'at Occurred* (1882).  
*Seets I' Yorkshire and Lancashire : Grimes' Comical Trip from Leeds to Liverpool by Canal* (1885).  
*Grimes' Visit to Th' Queen : A Royal Time Amang Royalties* (1892).  
*Grimes an' Mally's Trip to Epsom* (1900).  
*Grimes I' Disgrace* (1900).  
*Grimes' New Business ; Hay Thear!* (1900).  
*Grimes' Trip to Th' North Powl* (1900).  
*Raand Adaat Th' Taan by Sammywell Grimes* (1900).  
*Sammywell Grimes's Trip to Scarbro'* (1900).  
*Sammywell Grimes an His Wife Mally, Laikin' I' Lakeland : A Humourous [sic] Account of Their Visit to the Home of Famous Poets, Etc., Etc* (1910).

86 John Hartley, *Seets i' Lundun, A Yorkshireman's Ten Days' Trip* (Wakefield: W.Nicholson and Sons, [1876]), p.12.



times, and invariably clutching an umbrella. Grimes can be admired by the reader for his doggedness and he can elicit sympathy for his almost perpetual victim status, but he is no idealised Yorkshireman in whose glow contemporary regional readers could bask. In this he resembles some of the other ‘Tykes abroad’ who featured in dialect almanacs and spin-off publications, such as Arthur W. Bickerdike’s gormless Dooady Braan in *The Beacon Almanack*, from Halifax, and William Savile’s Bob Stubbs, who appeared in a series of almanacs and stories published in Bradford from 1907. The apparent popularity of such characters suggests a self-deprecating streak in later-nineteenth and early-twentieth century West Riding culture which contrasts with the earlier ballad and folklore tradition of the ‘Yorkshire Bite’ and the ability of Tykes to pull a fast one wherever they went. I have shown how readily these latter stereotypes were transmitted so that they could be taken as representative of Yorkshire as a whole, including its ‘new’ industrial areas, which were mostly populated in the first place by migrants from the adjacent countryside. But authors such as John Hartley created characters who were at the mercy of the people and economic forces surrounding them, thus tending to subvert the standard image of the independent Yorkshireman who could never be diddled. When these characters do triumph it is usually as a result of good luck or blind optimism rather than low Yorkshire cunning.

Hartley’s Sammywell Grimes exemplifies this strand, but he was not, however, a consistent character. Within single narratives he would abruptly change from an obtuse buffoon to a poetic dreamer. In *Seets i’ Yorkshire and Lancashire*, Grimes embarks on a canal trip from Leeds to Liverpool. It becomes a literary pilgrimage as Grimes/Hartley points out the associations of certain places along the way with various poets and authors, on both sides of the county border. It is an interesting depiction of a shared Lancashire/Yorkshire regional literary culture in the nineteenth century. There is also a wistful recollection of Bradford’s literary renaissance:

What happy times ther used to be i’ Bradford when kindred souls used to meet an’ swap thowts, an’ dream dreams, an’ build hooaps at wor nivver roofed in - but still left faandations on which others



**Figure 10:** John Hartley’s cover illustration for his 1892 novella *Grimes’ Visit to Th’ Queen*.  
Special Collections, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds

may raise a lastin temple to be admired when their names are forgotten. Wheear is Annie Clough? Who doesn't remember her sweet, heart-touchin poems 'at used to soa oft grace th' columns ov th' *Observer* ov twenty-five years ago. Gifted as few are, blessed bi nature wi' ivvery charm 'at mak's a perfect woman, an' today aw connot even find a copy of her works...<sup>87</sup>

Such purple passages show that Hartley was in part aiming at an educated, literary, middle-class Yorkshire audience prepared to include dialect almanacs and associated material in its repertoire of reading.

The convention of despatching a Yorkshireman to other parts of the country or overseas enabled the dialect writers and their readers to locate and observe 'Yorkshireness' out of context. It also enables us to learn something of the relationship between nineteenth-century Yorkshire and the country's political centre, including the relationship between the region and royalty. Charles Rogers used his alter ego Tom Treddlehoyle as a character who would occasionally quit Pogmoor, for example to visit the Great Exhibition of 1851, the subsequent account of this excursion being 'dedicated wi all't pleasure i't world ta Prince Olbert'. When Treddlehoyle arrives at Crystal Palace he makes some mention of exhibits from India, Canada and elsewhere but, with regional readership in mind, reserves his most detailed description for exhibits from Sheffield, Huddersfield, Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Barnsley and Manchester.<sup>88</sup>

Another of Rogers's stock characters was a Barnsley woman named Mally Muffindoaf, who, in the *Bairnsla Foaks' Annual*, penned a sequence of letters 'tut Queen', offering advice on marriage and other domestic matters. The incongruity of a working-class Yorkshirewoman addressing Victoria in such terms is intended to be inherently comical, especially when Mally begins to assume familiarity with 'Mistress Queen' and assume that this is reciprocated:

Yol understand at we doant live it same hause at we did when ha wrote ta yo before; yo mun dereck yor letter, Mistress Mally Muffindoaf, just raand Jonny Dobson's corner, Bairnsla – Doan't faget ta menshan it letter ha them little caps an things fit ha sent.<sup>89</sup>

At first glance, it might seem that the lèse-majesté of the self-delusional Mally Muffindoaf's letters was intended as a satire on royalty and social division in general. But the device was actually to enable Rogers to express his Tory and Royalist allegiances, as in Mally's letter to Queen Victoria on the subject of the christening of her first child:

Wha, wir all one same az anuther, it's true, as far as flesh an blood goaze; but when a King or a Queen's put ovver us, we owt ta look up to am, an feel pleaz'd at we live in a country where thay ar; for thaght may depend on't, if it warrant soa, we bi't same az't toad wit harrow teeth, all maisters...<sup>90</sup>

In the almanac for 1844, Mally was predictably enthusiastic that a new prince was to be created 'Duke a Yorksher' and when the Queen visited Leeds in 1858, Rogers wrote a long, enthusiastic and respectful account of the event:

... it wor a brilliant affair, ov which not egshacktly Leeds, but all Yorksher, owt ta feel praad, which thay do, eaze not a twinklin ov a daaht, an al be remembered, boath be t'Queen an all hur hearty Yorksher subjeckts, ta t'end a ther days.<sup>91</sup>

87 John Hartley, *Seets i' Yorkshire and Lancashire* (Wakefield: Nicholson, 1885), p.55.

88 *Tom Treddlehoyle's Trip ta Lunnan ta see Paxton's Great Glass Lantern*.

89 *Bairnsla Foaks' Annual...1841*, p.29.

90 *Ibid.*, p.14.

91 *Ibid.*, p.46.

In his *Bairnsla Foaks' Annual*, therefore, Rogers used demotic speech to express a quintessentially Tory sense of alliance between monarchy and working class, a hierarchy that was seen to be mutually beneficial. And there was no conflict between a strong sense of Yorkshire regional identity and a sense of belonging to a wider nation.

John Hartley's liberal social and political outlook did not prevent him from expressing patriotic and imperialistic sentiment. During his trip to London, Sammywell Grimes encounters a statue of Palmerston, prompting a burst of verse:

*Thy deeds when here  
Have made thee dear  
To ivvery Englishman!  
An' grateful hearts  
Mooar fame imparts  
Nor bronze an' granite can.*<sup>92</sup>

Later, after Grimes sees the Queen in procession he observes that:

...shoo just looked like what shoo is – a mother of a lot of grown-up childer, one 'at's hed her share o'troubles, as weel as pleasures, a' 'at's takken th' turn an's quietly gooin dahn life's hill, loved an' honoured bi a nation, an' respected bi a world.<sup>93</sup>

Another of Grimes's excursions was to Paris, which he acknowledges to be 'th' finest city i'th' world', But on his return, when he sees the White Cliffs of Dover...

It wor like as if it gave mi heart a bit ov a fillip an' aw felt aw mud awther aght wi' summat or aw should brust, for nivver did a child run to meet its mother wi' more joyous heart nor aw had when drawn near mi' native land.<sup>94</sup>

In 1892, Hartley had Grimes paying a visit to the Queen in Windsor and, after a series of misunderstandings, gaining an audience. He reports her speech in broad Yorkshire and the conversation between the two has a satirical edge. When the Queen explains her finances, Grimes observes 'Weel yo mun excuse my ignorance, for yo see aw've allus had to mix wi' fowk 'at's had to addle ther brass befoor they could spend it, but aw can see nah 'at it's a varry old fashioend way o' gettin' a livin'. As a mark of Royal favour, Victoria gives Grimes an old pair of spectacles and a bar of soap for his wife. 'Tell her aw know nowt abaath th' quality on it for it's been sent here as a sample'.<sup>95</sup>

The sequence of quotations given above demonstrates that John Hartley would continually flip between radical indignation at social inequity and a highly conventionalised form of patriotism. The 1877 novella *Grimes's Trip to America* concluded with a poem in Standard English that paid lachrymose tribute to 'Our Bible and Our Queen'.<sup>96</sup> The author who typified Yorkshire character and identity for his thousands of readers had no difficulty expressing conditional allegiance to the monarchical and imperial centre. Multiple identities were as much the norm in Victorian Britain as they are in the present day, despite the existence of an assertive cultural regionalism exemplified by the Yorkshire dialect almanac.

The political heterogeneity and mutability of the almanacs and their authors can be

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92 Hartley, *Seets I'Lundun*, p.39.

93 Ibid., p.84.

94 John Hartley, *Seets i'Paris* (Wakefield: Nicholson, 1878), p.131.

95 John Hartley, *Grimes's Visit to th' Queen* (Wakefield: Nicholson, 1892), pp.113-114.

96 John Hartley, *Grimes's Trip to America* (Wakefield: Nicholson, 1877), p.115.

compared to that of the regional comic periodicals analysed in the previous chapter. *Toby, the Yorkshire Tyke* made no attempt to conceal its Tory allegiances, but *The Yorkshireman* was more successful in avoiding bias, although elements of liberalism could be detected. The febrile political climate of 1890s Bradford was bound to challenge any avowed apoliticism and during the 1892 Bradford West election campaign, the magazine stepped off the fence, favouring the Liberal manufacturer Alfred Illingworth, the embodiment of 'Old' Liberalism in Bradford and an uncompromising opponent of organised labour.<sup>97</sup> Despite continued scepticism about Labour politics, *The Yorkshireman* was prepared to carry a series entitled 'The Flowing Tide', written by 'Pioneer', who described himself 'of the Yorkshire Labour Party; not any particular labour party, but one of the aggregate body of workers who are striving to put an end to a state of things in which this glorious land of ours is ruled alternately by and for the aristocracy and by and for capitalism'.<sup>98</sup>

If there was a distinctive political thread woven into Yorkshire identity during the nineteenth century, it was arguably the Tory radicalism exemplified by Richard Oastler. The Yorkshire periodicals of the last quarter of the century occasionally mounted Oastleresque campaigns. *The Yorkshireman* agitated on such subjects as woolsorter's disease and the plight of shop girls. An article of 12 May 1883, was devoted to the grievances of exploited milliners and dressmakers and its heading 'White Slaves' had echoes of Oastler's 'Yorkshire Slavery'. In January 1884, *Toby, the Yorkshire Tyke*, unabashedly Tory, raged against the 'legalised murder' of dressmakers. Asa Briggs draws a direct line of descent from the Oastler tradition to the later-century radicalism that resulted in the creation of the Independent Labour Party in Bradford.<sup>99</sup> On the other hand, it has been claimed that the Tory-radicalism particularly evident in Yorkshire was a short-lived tactical alliance that was quickly and easily dissolved,<sup>100</sup> although many former Chartists did gravitate towards Disraeli's Conservatives.<sup>101</sup> One of Leeds's Tory MPs, William St James Wheelhouse, was a 'working class icon', keeping Tory radicalism alive by campaigning not only for further factory legislation, and also for the working man's right to his pint of beer.<sup>102</sup> But despite the existence of a Tory-radical tradition that was distinctive of, if not peculiar to Yorkshire, it is not argued here that Yorkshire cultural identity had a strong political component. Among the major cities, for example, Leeds was closely contested territory between Liberals and Conservatives;<sup>103</sup> Bradford was a Liberal city where events and conditions, such as the Manningham Mills strike, led to important radical developments; Sheffield was a Conservative stronghold.

Similarly, attitudes towards conventional hierarchies varied in the almanacs and

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97 Laybourn, 'One of the Little Breezes Blowing Across Bradford', p.16.

98 Pioneer, 'The Flowing Tide', *YM*, 18 November 1891.

99 Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, pp.142-143.

100 Felix Driver, 'Tory Radicalism? Ideology, Strategy and Locality in Popular Politics During the Eighteen-Thirties', *Northern History*, 1991 (27), 120-138.

101 Matthew Roberts, 'Popular Conservatism in Britain, 1832-1914,' *Parliamentary History*, Vol 26, 3 (2007), 387-410.

102 Matthew Roberts '“Villa Toryism” and Popular Conservatism in Leeds, 1885-1902', *The Historical Journal* 49, 1 (2006), 217-246 [222].

103 Matthew Roberts, 'Constructing a Tory World View: popular politics and the Conservative press in late Victorian Leeds', *Historical Research*, vol 79, no 203 (February 2006), 115-143.



periodicals. The Leeds paper *The Yorkshire Owl* ran a certain amount of latter-day Tory-radical material, including a series of interviews with working men, which called for a closer rapprochement between capital and labour.<sup>104</sup> When the *Owl* carried pen pictures and photographs of 'Yorkshire Celebrities' they were almost exclusively hereditary members of the Yorkshire aristocracy, such as the Earls of Harewood and Scarborough and Earl Fitzwilliam. *The Yorkshireman* tended to be sceptical towards royalty and aristocracy. The author of 'The Pillory' dreaded an outbreak of 'toadyism' when the Prince and Princess of Wales were due to visit Leeds in June 1885.

Trade ought to inspire independence and manliness; indeed, in its own lines, this is what it does, for in the race for wealth these qualities are bound to be uppermost... but it is when the position has been gained, when the race has been won, when, more than ever, the man of trade could afford to assert his manliness and independence, that the spirit of flunkeyism gets hold of him and keeps him in a fiercer contention for the shallow emblems of social distinction...<sup>105</sup>

A more positive explanation for popular enthusiasm at the time of a Royal visit came from 'Friar Dominic'. When people had been bemused that 'semi-republican Bradford' had been 'ready to lick the shoes of the Prince of Wales', he argued that the city had always been truly radical and that 'true radicalism has always been, and always will be, in harmony with monarchy... the outburst of loyal enthusiasm which we see today is the legitimate outcome of the town's political principles'.<sup>106</sup> This can be compared to the royalist stance adopted by Charles Rogers, alias Tom Treddlehoyle, in his almanacs and associated productions.

Why did the dialect almanac, a regional adaptation of comic almanacs that had been published since the seventeenth century, become a Yorkshire speciality? It might have been a consequence of the growing importance of regulated time in a fully industrialised society, where the transition had been made from task-oriented to time-oriented labour.<sup>107</sup> The wide dissemination of the calendar could have played some role in this, but the calendrical content of the dialect almanacs, while it might have been useful to some households, was somewhat vestigial.<sup>108</sup> In any event, other industrialised areas, such as Lancashire and Newcastle, while they developed their own favoured forms of dialect publication, showed little interest in the almanac. This is a strong indication of the existence of cultural self-determination within geographically, socially and economically contiguous areas of the North of England.

The explanation for the dialect almanac 'craze' in Yorkshire is probably a simple matter of imitation. Charles Rogers was increasingly successful with his *Bairnsla Fowks Annual* and, from the 1850s, more and more writers, publishers and small business people began to emulate it. Many of the almanacs began as promotional ventures by small businesses, but the most successful ones – notably the *Clock Almanack* – transcended these origins. Writers for the almanacs could be found among young men whose foreshortened schooling was supplemented by auto-didacticism and their creative ambitions were encouraged by

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104 E.G. 'The Dark Side III: Pattern Makers', *The Yorkshire Owl*, 17 December 1892.

105 'The Pillory', *YM*, 13 June 1885.

106 Friar Dominic, 'Saturday Sermon', *YM*, 24 June 1882.

107 See E.P. Thompson, 'Time, Work Discipline and Industrial Capitalism', *Past and Present* No 38 (December, 1967), 56-97.

108 Maidment, 'Re-arranging the year', p. 108.

a burgeoning regional literary culture in the industrial towns of Yorkshire, which also offered a substantial market. Russell's appraisal is that in the nineteenth century, working-class dialect writers only just outweighed their middle-class counterparts in numbers.<sup>109</sup> Certainly, few seem to have been born in conditions of poverty and some had decent schooling, but most of the key writers had backgrounds in trades, crafts or lower-middle class occupations which they usually continued to pursue in tandem with their literary activities. Writing in dialect – or the use of orthography to represent local speech patterns and accents – was one of the modes of expression available to them and helped them to stake out their Yorkshire cultural identity. Some wrote almost exclusively in dialect, but others – in particular Hartley and Burnley – switched between dialect and Standard English, or 'classic English' as it was sometimes called, according to the subject matter and the sentiments they wished to express. Dialect was deemed best for comedy, pathos and social realism.

The use of dialect in the almanacs and publications spun off from them, such as Hartley's Grimes novellas, gives them an implicit regionalism. But this urban-inspired material is rarely self-satisfied or aggressive in its Yorkshireness and is somewhat more realistic and self-deprecating when it deals with the regional character than some of the more folkloristic expressions of Yorkshire identity that still had currency. National and imperial patriotism and a regard for Royalty are quite consistent with regional identities in the almanacs. But the large and prolonged market for these publications also indicates a desire to commemorate, celebrate and explore a distinct Yorkshire identity especially by means of the language that Hartley described as 'My Native Twang'.<sup>110</sup>

## Conclusion

The dialect almanac was a form of popular publishing that became a Yorkshire speciality during the nineteenth century. Some of the publications sold in large numbers and had a loyal following over several decades, although, like the weekly periodicals, they fell off in numbers at the end of the nineteenth century, perhaps because their old-fashioned formula and inherent nostalgia for pre-and-proto-industry did not chime in well with the present-mindedness which some historians have detected at this period. The almanacs were generally comic in nature, but the most successful of them, written by John Hartley, included sentimental material and social comment. The subject matter, the characterisations and the socio-economic circumstances in the almanacs would have been familiar to working and lower-middle class readers, but there is also evidence of intersection with a broader regional literary culture and some strong hints that the publications were read across a fairly wide strata of society. This would echo the state of affairs in Lancashire, where dialect literature attracted a socially heterogeneous readership and was actively promoted to the middle classes.<sup>111</sup> The almanacs were therefore a significant and specific cultural component of Yorkshire's regional identity and the popularity of the leading writers can help us to reconstruct the outlook of Yorkshire people during this period.

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<sup>109</sup> Russell, *Looking North*, p.121.

<sup>110</sup> John Hartley, *The Halifax Original Illuminated Clock Almanack 1868*, (Halifax: Walker, 1867), p.38.

<sup>111</sup> Hollingworth, 'Lancashire Writing and the Antiquarians', p.27.

It is suggested, for example, that John Hartley's doggedly stoic philosophy found favour with readers because it mirrored their own outlook, although perhaps helping to shape it as well. The almanacs often reflected a widespread nostalgia for earlier domestic and artisanal modes of industrial production and there was indignation at some of the wealth divisions created by capitalism and the environmental and social impact of industrialisation. But this rarely developed into a stance more extreme than radical Liberalism and some of the almanacs were resolutely Tory, reflecting the political heterogeneity of Yorkshire.

# Themes in Victorian and Edwardian regional fiction

## 1. 'A Yorkshire story'

AN authoritative bibliography of regional fiction in Britain and Ireland provides statistical evidence of its exponential growth, especially from the 1870s to a peak between 1905 and 1913.<sup>1</sup> But the simple fact of a novel being located in a specified area does not necessarily mean that it is a 'regional novel' in the fullest sense of the term. For Phyllis Bentley, the regional novel depicted 'the life of [a] region in such a way that the reader is conscious of the characteristics which are unique to that region and differentiate it from others in the common motherland'.<sup>2</sup> K.D.M. Snell, who has been the most persuasive advocate of the inter-disciplinary potential of the regional novel for historians, defines it in greater detail as

fiction that is set in a recognisable region, and which describes features distinguishing the life, social relations, customs, language, dialect, or other aspects of the culture of that area and its people. Fiction with a strong sense of local geography, topography or landscape is also covered by this definition. In such writing a particular place or regional culture may perhaps be used to illustrate an aspect of life in general, or the effects of a particular environment upon the people living in it.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter will provide analysis of some of the key themes that can be detected within Yorkshire-set and Yorkshire-authored fiction during the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth. They include a lament for pre-and-proto industrial Yorkshire. In the novels of Yorkshire authors such as Halliwell Sutcliffe and William Riley this process amounts to a revulsion towards or an attempted denial of industrialisation. There will also be a discussion of the practice of bi-dialectism, whereby it would seem that some wealthy, middle or upper-class Yorkshire people adopted a dual identity, tailoring their speech patterns to social context.

Yorkshire was the location for at least 135 novels during the period 1840-1914. They were the work of some 57 authors. From 1850 to 1900 the rise in the number of Yorkshire novels was exponential – there were an estimated two in the 1850s; six in the 1860s; 12 in the 1870s; 24 in the 1880s; 41 in the 1890s.<sup>4</sup> The county was not exceptional. For example,

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1 K. D. M. Snell (ed.), *The Bibliography of Regional Fiction in Britain and Ireland, 1800-2000* (Aldershot, 2002), p.5. This bibliography uses the county as its basis of organisation. Its editor states (p.2) that 'regional novelists of course did not usually write with any such entity to the fore of their minds, although there have been notable exceptions, particularly for Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cornwall and Devon.' For its comprehensiveness, Snell's bibliography largely supersedes the earlier standard work – Lucien Leclaire, *A General Analytical Bibliography of the Regional Novelists of the British Isles 1800-1950* (Clermont Ferrand: De Bussac, 1954). But this book is still of value for the brief biographical information it furnishes for authors and for some plot summaries. Its principal method of organisation is to list novels and authors by periods, which are then assigned rather arbitrary descriptions such as 'picturesque', 'realistic' and 'sentimental'. The indexing system also uses the county to categorise authors. Yorkshire is interestingly sub-divided into West Riding, North Riding, Holderness and Dales.

2 Bentley, *English Regional Novel*, p.7.

3 Snell, 'The regional novel', p.1.

4 Estimate made using the *Bibliography of Regional Fiction* which the present writer has found to be exhaustive, having been able to supply very few omissions.



in the same period, Lancashire was the setting for at least 142 works of fiction, produced by some 60 authors.<sup>5</sup> But the Yorkshire novels are highly diverse, as befits the region. The North Riding, especially the coast, and the Dales were exploited for their dramatic, elemental possibilities. The West Riding was the setting for industrial fiction and novels that explored class relationships in a new and socially mobile society. But even in the West Riding, some authors sought to construct a post- Brontë vision of an almost feudal upland society well away from the mills and the urban working classes.

It was a convention of Victorian fiction for a book to be furnished with an alternative title or a sub-title. It also became common for novels to proclaim their geographical setting. This provides evidence of the popularity of the regional novel genre and demonstrates that Victorian readers, with an enhanced awareness of regional diversity, were eager to explore the country, if only between the pages of a book. R.D. Blackmore, whom Keith has described as ‘the first unequivocally (if not exclusively) regional English novelist’, is best known for his West Country fiction, but he ranged the nation in his search for locales, as did the prolific Rosa Mackenzie Kettle.<sup>6</sup> A Yorkshire location was frequently invoked in titles. Examples include Blackmore’s *Mary Anerley* (1880), described as *A Yorkshire Tale*. Katherine S. McQuoid’s *Doris Barugh* (1878) was subtitled *A Yorkshire Story*, as were, for example, Mrs G. Linnaeus Banks’s *Wooers and Winners* (1882) and Mary Bell’s *A Work-A-Day World* (1900). As a variant, Philip Gilbert Hamerton’s *Wenderholme* (1882) was described as *A Story of Lancashire and Yorkshire*. Such phrases provided only the barest information. But it can be inferred that the authors and publishers felt that to describe a novel in this way would be to provide readers with some expectations as to the nature of the story, its environment and its characters. It can also be assumed that some variant of ‘A Yorkshire Story’ was intended, however modestly, as a selling point.

It is difficult to know what the precise expectations of readers might have been. The size and diversity of the county meant that ‘A Yorkshire Story/Tale’ could signify many things. *Mary Anerley* is a drama of derring-do among smugglers on the treacherous North Yorkshire coast. By contrast, Mary Bell’s *A Work-A-Day World*, as its title implies, is ‘a history of humble folk’ who dwell in a rather cursorily described West Riding town, in which a stern but compassionate vicar deals with the tribulations of his flock.<sup>7</sup> McQuoid’s *Doris Barugh* is a tragic story that deals with the consequences when a dialect-speaking

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5 Other regions that might be presumed to have had a strong regional identity include Northumberland, the location for approx 56 novels by some 30 authors, 1840-1914. In this period Devon and Cornwall combined produced 148 novels, from 54 authors.

6 Keith, *Regions of the Imagination*, p.69. Blackmore’s novels with full titles that specified their setting were *Cradock Nowell: A Tale of the New Forest* (1866); *Lorna Doone: A Romance of Exmoor* (1869); *Alice Lorraine: A Tale of the South Downs* (1875); *Mary Anerley: A Yorkshire Tale* (1880); *Christowell: A Dartmoor Tale* (1881); *Kit and Kitty: A Story of West Middlesex* (1894); *Perlycross: A Tale of the Western Hills* (1894); *Dariel: A Romance of Surrey* (1897) The titles of all Kettle’s novels had a regional flavour, but the most explicit were *The Mistress of Langdale Hall: a romance of the West Riding* (1872); *Under the Grand Old Hills. A romance of the Malverns* (1875); *La Belle Marie. A romance of the Cornish coast* (1880); *Lewell Pastures, A story of the Welsh borderland* (1883); *On Leithay’s Banks. A Highland Story* (1884); *The Sisters of Ombersleigh, or, Under the South Downs* (1889); *The Highland Sister’s Promise. A story of the Perthshire Moors* (1895).

7 Readers of this book, described as ‘A Yorkshire Story’, would have been confused by the fact that the cover illustration depicted a wooden-legged Scotsman wearing a kilt. He was a character in the book but the illustration suggests that publishers were sometimes less than rigorous in their regional delineation.

girl is selected by the local squire for his future bride, educated and taken away from her class. Linnaeus Banks's *Wooers and Winners* is a story of love and intrigue partly set in rural Craven and partly in the febrile financial centre of Leeds of the 1830s.

Halliwell Sutcliffe, whose career as a published author began in the 1890s and continued until his death in 1932, identified three distinct sub-regions within Yorkshire that had inspired his fiction. One was 'Haworth and the moors that clamber out to Pendle Hill'; a second was 'Wharfedale in its upper reaches – a rich field to the portrayer of character'; a third was 'the country that begins at Hawes, the rough good market town of Yoredale'.<sup>8</sup> The implication was that three areas triggered a different style of story telling, although Sutcliffe's most characteristic novels were Hardy-esque tragedies or lurid melodramas set on the Haworth moors.

Sometimes, as an alternative to the rather broad 'Yorkshire Story', the more specific 'West Riding' was invoked. James Burnley's *Looking for the Dawn* (1874), Amelia E. Barr's *Between Two Loves* (1889) and D.F.E. Sykes's *Sister Gertrude* (1908) were among the novels described as *A Tale of the West Riding*. Kettle's *The Mistress of Langdale Hall* (1872) was *A Romance of the West Riding* (1872). John Bowling's *Brailsford* (1888) was *A Tale of West Riding Life*. Lady Catherine Milnes Gaskell entitled a book of short stories *Prose Idylls of the West Riding* (1907). With all of these, the reader, aware that the West Riding of Yorkshire was an important manufacturing region, would have had a surer idea of what to expect – a novel or stories set against an industrial and mostly urban background, with a cast of working-class characters. In the case of most of the books named above, readers would have had their expectations met, although the middle classes and the gentry were usually added to the class mix, or sometimes predominated.

Many Yorkshire-set novels of the Victorian and Edwardian period did not proclaim their region in any obvious way. Neither Sutcliffe nor William Riley (1866-1961), two of the most widely-read Yorkshire novelists of their period, added locational subtitles to books such as the latter's exceptionally successful *Windyridge* (1912) or the former's *A Man of the Moors* (1897). But whether a book was sold as 'A Yorkshire Tale' or the reader was left to discover its location by other methods, fiction was an important means whereby the identity or multiple identities of the county were constructed and disseminated to a nationwide readership.

Amelia E. Barr (1831-1919) had a youthful experience of Yorkshire that led her to write positively of the county after she emigrated to the USA and became an extremely popular novelist.<sup>9</sup> Her father was a Methodist minister, so although Barr (née Huddleston) was born in Lancashire she lived in various parts of the country as a child, including Shipley, in the West Riding. This diverse experience means that her Yorkshire-centred conceptions of Englishness are a significant contribution to a theme that has recurred in this thesis. In her autobiography she wrote that

I never can write or speak those words, West Riding, without a sensible rise of temperature, and an intense longing to be in England. For the West Riding is the heart of England, and, whatever is distinctively English, is also distinctively West Riding. Its men and women are so full of life,

<sup>8</sup> Halliwell Sutcliffe, 'Yorkshire as a Novelist's County', *Yorkshire Post*, 12 February 1930.

<sup>9</sup> Her works included *Remember the Alamo* (1888), said to have inspired the John Wayne film *The Alamo* – [<http://www.online-literature.com/amelia-barr/> accessed 12 August 2008].

so spontaneously cheerful, so sure of themselves, so upright and downright in speech and action, that no one can for a moment misunderstand either their liking or disliking. Their opinions hold no element of change or dissent. They are as hearty and sincere in their religion, as their business, and if they form a friendship with a family, it will likely be one to the third and fourth generation.<sup>10</sup>

This was an echo of sentiments that Barr expressed at the start of her 1887 novel *The Hallam Succession*:

Yorkshire is the epitome of England. Whatever is excellent in the whole land is found there. The men are sturdy, shrewd and stalwart; hard-headed and hard-fisted, and have notably done their work in every era of English history. They are also a handsome race, the finest specimens extant of the pure Anglo-Saxon, and they still preserve the imposing stature and the bright blonde characteristics of the race.<sup>11</sup>

Regarding Yorkshire, or any Northern county or region, as an epitome of England or Englishness would seem to be in opposition to a tendency in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries to forge what Russell has described as a 'renewed respect for the ancient and the pre-industrial', causing 'a tendency to view the Home Counties as something akin to an English 'homeland'''. This would be 'at the core of the reconstructed "Englishness" of the period'.<sup>12</sup> Alun Howkins too has detected, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, 'a new Englishness' based on a belief that the South country was the source of the English race and culture.<sup>13</sup> But Amelia Barr's assertions provide further evidence – albeit from a long-absent émigré – that this process of creating a Southern/rural sense of Englishness was still fluid during the later-nineteenth century. James Burnley demonstrated the different layers of identity, regional and national, when he wrote that, 'It is, no doubt, a proud thing to be able to say, "I am an Englishman", but still prouder is the boast if the Englishman can add "and a Yorkshireman" '.<sup>14</sup>

Amelia E. Barr's principal contribution to Yorkshire regional fiction was *Between Two Loves: A Tale of the West Riding* (1886). She had been resident in the United States for some 30 years when she wrote this novel, but the West Riding industrial background gave her the opportunity to explore a variety of class and gender issues. The central character is a self-made man, Jonathan Burley, a widower who falls in love with one of his employees, whom he eventually marries, despite being warned by an old friend that 'Thou art a mill owner now, and a landowner too, and Sarah, poor lass, is nobbut a hand'.<sup>15</sup> The class picture is complicated by the fact that Burley's daughter has married the local squire and the generally democratic Burley takes a great deal of pride in her entrée into high society.

10 Amelia E. Barr, *All the Days of My Life* (New York and London: D. Appleton and Company, 1913), Chapter One, read online at <http://www.archive.org/details/allthedaysoflife00barrich> [accessed 17 Sep, 2008].

11 Amelia E. Barr, *The Hallam Succession: A Tale of Methodist Life in Two Countries* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1887), p.3.

12 Russell, *Looking North*, p.26. Paul Ward, in *Britishness Since 1870*, has argued against placing too much emphasis on rural imagery. Focused mainly on the South East and the Cotswolds, such imagery has widely been seen 'to form the dominant discourse of Englishness', but Ward argues that 'much celebration of the British way of life has emphasised the contribution of towns and cities' (p.58). 'National identity has... been constructed from a combination of both rural and urban Britain' (p.66).

13 Alun Howkins, 'The Discovery of Rural England' in Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (eds), *Englishness – Politics and Culture 1880-1920* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p.72.

14 Burnley, *West Riding Sketches*, p.9.

15 Amelia E. Barr, *Between Two Loves* (London: Frederick Warne and Co, edition undated. Novel first published London : J. Clarke & Co., 1886), p.32.

Yorkshire industry is depicted as ruthlessly competitive, but it also creates social fluidity and perhaps Barr was motivated to write a West Riding novel because she saw it a locale for exploring social and environmental transformations.

Similar themes can be found in the work of Philip Gilbert Hamerton (1834-1894), who was born in Lancashire and had family links with Yorkshire. The novel *Wenderholme* (1869) was subtitled *A Story of Lancashire and Yorkshire* and can be read as a commentary on differing characteristics of the contiguous counties. Hamerton was principally known as an artist and critic, but *Wenderholme*, the first of his two novels, has been described as ‘indebted in its style to the earlier work of George Eliot’.<sup>16</sup> The story is divided between the industrialised Lancashire towns of Shayton and Sootythorn on one side of the border and the ancient houses of Wenderholme and Stanithburn Peel in Yorkshire. The self-made Lancashire manufacturer Jacob Ogden becomes fabulously wealthy, while the owner of Wenderholme, Colonel Stanburne, is financially ruined by restoration work on his ancestral home. Ogden buys Wenderholme and late in the novel there is an episode in which a new road is constructed over the border from Shayton to Wenderholme. This can be read symbolically, as if the morally dubious modernity of industrialised Lancashire was being driven into the heart of a Yorkshire where older values still had some purchase. Eventually Ogden is, quite literally, driven mad by his obsessive money-making and the aristocratic Yorkshireman Colonel Stanburne finds some redemption.

This interpretation of *Wenderholme* can be justified to some extent by Hamerton’s preface to his abridged 1882 edition of the book, addressed to ‘An Old Lady in Yorkshire’:

You remember a time when the country in which this story is placed was quite different from what it is today, when the old proprietors lived in their halls undisturbed by modern innovation, and neither enriched by building leases, nor humiliated by the rivalry of mighty manufacturers. You have seen wonderful changes come to pass, the valleys filled with towns, and the towns connected by railways, and the fields covered with suburban villas. You have seen people become richer and more refined, though perhaps less merry, than they used to be; till the simple, unpretending life of the poorer gentlefolks of the past has become an almost incredible tradition, which few have preserved in their memory.<sup>17</sup>

The temptation to subject *Wenderholme* to the exegesis outlined above must be tempered by a reading of Hamerton’s autobiography.<sup>18</sup> Many of the events and locations in the novel are remarkably close to those of the author’s early life. For example, he was brought up in rapidly industrialising Burnley and had estranged relations who occupied the ancient Hellifield Peel, across the border in Yorkshire. Nevertheless, a contemporary reader of the novel would be left with some impression of a contrast between Lancashire and Yorkshire based on a different economy and social relations. There would be some historic basis for this, derived from the relative tardiness with which the Yorkshire wool textile industry developed into a fully-mechanised factory system, compared with Lancashire cotton manufacture.<sup>19</sup> Generally, however, fiction with a West Riding location had an industrial

16 Kate Flint, ‘Hamerton, Philip Gilbert (1834–1894)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12038, accessed 10 Sept 2008].

17 Philip Gilbert Hamerton, *Wenderholme: A Story of Lancashire and Yorkshire* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1882). [http://www.archive.org/details/wenderholmestory00hamerich; accessed 8-10 September, 2008].

18 Philip Gilbert Hamerton, *An Autobiography, 1834-1858, and a Memoir by his wife, 1858-1894* (London: Seeley and Co, 1897).

19 See K.G. Ponting, Introduction to *Baines’s Account of the Woollen Manufacture in England* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1970), p.46. Technology designed for processes such as weaving cotton could not easily



incursion. Sometimes it was out of sight but a disquieting presence. Kettle's *The Mistress of Langdale Hall* (1872) was mainly set in quasi-rural locations among the occupants of ancient buildings. But the battlements of Langdale Hall are 'blackened by coal smoke, from the not far distant furnaces, frowning over the valley'.<sup>20</sup> Phyllis Bentley would argue that one of the factors that made the West Riding an ideal location for fiction was its 'teeming population ... moving to the constant hum of machinery against a superb background of wild moors and massive hills'.<sup>21</sup> Writers frequently commented on the close and distinctive juxtaposition of rural and industrial landscape in the West Riding. One of Kettle's characters remarks, 'Who would have thought that so near one of your great manufacturing cities in busy, wealthy England there could be found a place so utterly wild and solitary as this... the West Riding is not spoilt yet'.<sup>22</sup> John Bowling was another novelist who described the Janus-like nature of West Riding towns:

On one side [of a suburban village] lay the town of Brailsford, enveloped in smoke, as though a perpetual fog hung over the place, nothing being distinctly visible, save the glittering slates on the housetops, the tall chimneys and the frowning outlines of mammoth workshops. Down the southern slope of the hill was a beautiful stretch of country. As far as the eye could reach, hills flanked each other, tier above tier...<sup>23</sup>

James Burnley described the contrasts to be found in the area when he wrote that 'as an industrial centre, it is almost unparalleled in the variety and extent of its operations' but there were also 'quiet valleys, looking as quaint and picturesque as if the wonders of steam were unknown there'.<sup>24</sup>

The vulnerability of the West Riding countryside, as industry gathered pace, was widely reflected, while industrialisation could be something simultaneously to celebrate and to fear. In *Shirley* (1849), Robert Moore stood firm against the Luddites and secured the future of his mill. This was seen as a welcome development, but Charlotte Brontë, making her own elegiac, ironic, mid-century comment on the impact of industry on the West Riding landscape gave him this speech:

The copse shall be firewood ere five years elapse: the beautiful wild ravine shall be a smooth descent; the green natural terrace shall be a paved street: there shall be cottages in the dark ravine, and cottages on the lonely slopes: the rough, pebbled track shall be an even, firm, broad black, sooty road, bedded with the cinders from my mill...<sup>25</sup>

Much of *Woovers and Winners, or Under the Scars* (1880), a 'Yorkshire Story' by Mrs G. Linnaeus Banks, as the Manchester-born Isabella Banks (née Varley) styled herself, is set in rural Ribblesdale, but the atmosphere of 1830s Leeds, where dubious financial

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be adapted for wool. For a concise summary of the development of the factory system in Yorkshire, see Pat Hudson, *The Industrial Revolution* (London: Edward Arnold, 1992), p.119.

20 Rosa Mackenzie Kettle, *The Mistress of Langdale Hall: A Romance of the West Riding* (London: T.Fisher Unwin, 1906; originally published 1872), p.22. The dedication is 'To John Lister, Esq, of Shibden Hall, Yorkshire, in memory of happy summers spent under his roof'. The novel is recognisably set in the Shibden Valley, Halifax, a rural enclave that was very close to heavy industrialisation.

21 Phyllis Bentley, 'Yorkshire as a Novelist's County', *Yorkshire Post*, 5 February 1930.

22 Kettle, *Mistress of Langdale Hall*, pp.187-188.

23 John Bowling, *Brailsford: A Tale of the West Riding* (London: Simpkin, Marshall; Leeds: Walker and Laycock, 1888), p.9.

24 Burnley, *West Riding Sketches*, pp.13-14.

25 Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley* (orig., published 1849; edition cited, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.644.

speculation and political chicanery were rife, plays a large part in the story, and there are also scenes at a Barnsley colliery, where lives are lost in a flood. Banks provided her own analysis of the novel in an appendix to an 1882 edition: 'The action of my story occupies a lapse of time which may well be called a period of transition; old institutions, habits, usages were dying out or being superseded, a new era was struggling into birth'.<sup>26</sup> From Walter Scott onwards, it has been almost a *sine qua non* for historical fiction to be placed in a time of transition. The West Riding offered this to authors late in the nineteenth century. For example, the Luddite risings of 1812-13 remain an exemplar of painful social, economic and technological transition, and, in the wake of *Shirley*, this episode was adopted as the basis of novels by a wide variety of authors from within and without the county.<sup>27</sup>

The North Riding offered different possibilities to authors. In *Between the Heather and the Northern Sea* (1884), by the Whitby-born Mary Linskill (1840-1891) the London-raised Genevieve, whose artist father has returned to Yorkshire, climbs Langbarugh Moor:

The great wild waste itself lay beyond. There was nothing to burst upon the sight. Slowly, and with a sense of oppressiveness, you became aware that you stood looking out over an apparently boundless desolation. The purple-black barrenness stretched like a gloomy sea from the open horizon to the other...<sup>28</sup>

Such evocations create a sense of the otherness of the north of Yorkshire. In 1902, the Bradford-born Oliver Onions (1873-1961) published a collection of stories entitled *Tales from a Far Riding*. The adjective 'far' is eloquent in suggesting distance and strangeness. The stories, set in a partly fictionalised Yorkshire Dales, deal with such subjects as a

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26 Isabella Banks, *Wooers and Winners, or Under the Scars* (Manchester: Abel Heywood. London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co, 1882), p.341.

27 Books and serials that form a nineteenth century Luddite canon include: Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley* (1848).

A.L. (Alfred Lodge) *Sad Times, a Tale of the Luddites* (1870) – the work of a Huddersfield author.

Frank Peel, *The Risings of the Luddites, Chartists and Plug Drawers* (1880) – this book was a work of local history by a Spen Valley writer and journalist but it used novelistic techniques.

Anon, *Daisy Baines, the Luddite's Daughter* (1880) – serialised in the *Huddersfield Weekly News*, October 1880 to April 1881. There is no evidence that the serial was subsequently issued in book form.

J.S. Borlase, *Force and Fraud, or the Luddites in Leeds* (1884) – serialised in the *Leeds Weekly Express*, May-November 1884 and apparently not issued in book form. Borlase, a sensationalist writer of the period, with a particular fixation on secret societies, adapted this narrative to other locations. For example it began serialisation in the *Leicester Chronicle* in August 1884 as *Force and Fraud, or the Luddites in Leicester*.

G.A. Henty, *Through the Fray, a Tale of the Luddite Riots* (1885) – this book belonged to a trilogy of domestic stories by an author best known for his adventure stories located in the overseas empire.

Mary A. Jagger, *Rookery Mill* (1886) – the work of a Huddersfield author and local historian.

Mrs G. Linnaeus Banks, *Bond Slaves* (1893) – serialised as *In Bondage* by the *Leeds Mercury*, 1887. This was one of the most ambitious and wide ranging of the Luddite fictions, taking in events in Lancashire and Nottingham but concentrating on the West Riding.

Alfred Colbeck, *Scarlea Grange, or a Luddite's Daughter* (1893) – written by a Methodist minister who had been the incumbent at Lindley Chapel, Huddersfield. Published by the Religious Tract Society, *Scarlea Grange* was reissued in 1910 as *In the Toils of the Luddites*.

D.F.E. Sykes and George Henry Walker, *Ben o' Bills, The Luddite* (1898) – Sykes had been a radical Liberal politician in the Colne Valley and this novel – often credited to him alone – is the most sympathetic to the Luddite cause.

With the exception of *Force and Fraud*, all of these narratives were principally based on a sequence of events in the vicinity of Huddersfield and the Spen Valley. Repetition and reinvention gave these events mythic status and the croppers' leader George Mellor, executed in 1813, was arguably the most widely fictionalised character of the nineteenth century.

28 Mary Linskill, *Between the Heather and the Northern Sea* (London: Macmillan, 1902; first published 1884), p.17.

murderous feud and 'The May Stang' is a picaresque adventure redolent of Stevenson's *Kidnapped*, indicative of the space which a nineteenth or early-twentieth century author could locate in the North Riding.

## 2. The Mill-ocracy and the Moors

IN 1885 the Bradford author and journalist James Burnley asserted that the Yorkshireman's 'pride in his native place' proceeded largely from the size of the county. He went on to describe its diversity:

So extensive a province is able to enclose within its inner limits a people who are so far removed from the outer world as to enable them to cherish their ancient characteristics, and preserve them from being thoroughly effaced by the rush and roar, the polish and affectation of modern progress.<sup>29</sup>

He referred here to the people of the North and East Ridings, where 'commerce has been chary of carrying her screaming railway whistles, her manufacturers, her speculators and her armies of workmen...' Here, the population 'live their lives... much as they did in the middle of the last century'. The West Riding, by contrast, was a place where 'the old and new clash together'.

This West Riding life is invigorating, though so varied, and the dash and spirit of the new order receive such substantial support...from the steady, plodding spirit of the old, that there is little wonder that prosperity so largely prevails. The whole of the civilised world is represented in miniature in the West Riding. As an industrial centre it is almost unparalleled in the variety and extent of its operations.<sup>30</sup>

Burnley acknowledged that the West Riding had its 'miles and miles of splendid scenery, where mountain, glen, wood and river charmingly alternate'.<sup>31</sup> But most of his writing - fictional and journalistic - had an urban backdrop. This section will examine Burnley's fictional work and contrast it with that of contemporaries such as Halliwell Sutcliffe and William Riley, who were also West Riding authors but treated its industrial development with disdain, cultivating instead a heightened attachment to moorland and ancient modes of existence.

With his novel *Looking for the Dawn: A Tale of the West Riding* (1874), first serialised in the short-lived *Yorkshire Magazine*, Burnley supplies Yorkshire with an industrial novel that arguably deserves a place in the canon that includes *Mary Barton*, *North and South* and *Hard Times*. *Looking for the Dawn* is a novel with a purpose, expressed in its preface.

The chief aim... has been to describe a phase of working life that seems to be little understood beyond its own limits and to show how difficult it has been in many instances to bring the landed-ocracy and the mill-ocracy, if it be allowable to use such words, into good feeling with each other.<sup>32</sup>

The novel begins in 1848, when

In every town and village of 'merrie England', the poor are crying for work and, failing work, for bread...It is then that the imaginary remedy called the Charter is flaunted before their excited minds... they regard the obtaining it as the one means of winning an earthly El Dorado'.<sup>33</sup>

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29 Burnley, *West Riding Sketches*, p. 11.

30 Ibid., pp. 11-13.

31 Ibid., p.14.

32 James Burnley, *Looking for the Dawn: A Tale of the West Riding* (London: Simpkin, Marshall; Bradford: T.Brear, 1874).

33 Ibid., p.1.

Burnley is retrospectively sceptical about Chartism, and he introduces an unsympathetic character named Mr Trimmer, a paid Chartist organiser who, after the failure of the Charter, becomes a charlatan evangelist. This character is redolent of the union organiser in Dickens's *Hard Times*. The plot of *Looking for the Dawn* is set in motion when two Woolborough mill workers are arrested for taking part in a Chartist meeting. They are freed from gaol during a riot and flee overseas, aided by Hubert Trafford, a liberal minded son of a fiercely traditional squire of ancient lineage. The differing views of the elder and younger Traffords towards industry provide the novel's purposive framework. For selfish reasons, Squire Trafford is fundamentally opposed to the industrialisation and the industrialists of Woolborough. As the Traffords sit in their ancestral home...

Every now and then... a great curling snake of smoke, vomited from one of those factory chimneys which are so hateful in the sight of a genuine Trafford, crawls gloomily across the sky, and tells a tale (to those who are willing to read it) of thin, half-nourished children and haggard mothers toiling with the dejection of slaves to earn what will barely suffice to keep body and soul together. But the Traffords read no such story in the factory smoke; it only serves to call forth their horror and disgust at having the landscape over which they exercise the rights of proprietorship overshadowed by it.<sup>34</sup>

Burnley worked out his design of bringing the 'landed-ocracy' and the 'mill-ocracy' into a greater understanding by having young Trafford, despite the expectation that he will inherit a country estate, enter the wool textile industry, becoming a partner in a mill. 'The merchants and spinners were glad to do business with the new man, who had stepped down from his aristocratic exclusiveness to be one of them'.<sup>35</sup> This development is part of the 'Dawn' of the book's title, the other being the fact that Hubert Trafford falls in love with and eventually marries a mill girl whose father had been one of the imprisoned Chartists. Burnley creates a contrapuntal character in Tom Ayrton, the son of a mill owner, who is bent on precisely the opposite social direction to that of young Trafford. When his father tries to persuade him to take a more active part in business, Tom's response is:

'But father, you put me into other footsteps. It's only recently that you've been putting me into yours'. 'Yes,' said Mr Ayrton with a sigh... 'I have educated you for a gentleman...'<sup>36</sup>

Just as the Yorkshire periodicals of the 1880s and 90s contained material critical of allegedly wastrel sons of manufacturers, several Yorkshire novels of the late-nineteenth century have passages which could be taken to bolster the 'gentrification' thesis developed by Wiener, either by reflecting the contempt of traditional gentry for industry, or, more pertinently, the reluctance of the sons of successful manufacturers to go into trade. In his novel *Sister Gertrude* (1908), D. F. E. Sykes – who had a background in radical politics in the Colne Valley – was satirical at the expense of

the jeunesse doree of the wealthy manufacturers and merchants of the town [Huddersfield], who patronised a Bond Street tailor - 'can't get a decent cut in the country, don't you know' – were much concerned about the fit of their boots and the colour of their ties and gloves; affected a languid drawl, crawled on the sunny side of New Street of a Saturday morning, found life a 'doosid bore', avoided a reference to the paternal mill or counting house themselves, and thought any such reference by others uncommon bad form; held commissions in the Yeomanry or Volunteers, and were rigorous in the use of their pseudo-military titles in season and out of season; had a club of their own, from

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34 Burnley, *Looking for the Dawn*, p.95.

35 Ibid., p.267.

36 Ibid., p.39.



which the retailer of the goods their fathers manufactured were jealously excluded...<sup>37</sup>

Shortly after this passage, a character is introduced who, 'as he had lived much in London before condescending upon Huddersfield...was rather a favourite at this club...'. This suggests that, among the middle classes at least, London had reasserted its cultural primacy by the turn of the century.

Wiener developed his thesis as he sought an explanation for the seeming fact that the English, having pioneered industrialism, then turned their back on the process. He propagated the idea that the rentier aristocracy retained its cultural hegemony and 'reshaped the industrial bourgeoisie in its own image'.<sup>38</sup> It is a theory that has frequently been challenged. In a study that focuses on West Yorkshire, George Sheeran describes as a caricature the belief that 'if not fathers, then sons were quick to retire on the profits of industry... settling down to live the lives of landed gentlemen'.<sup>39</sup> Sheeran found that while many wealthy West Riding manufacturers built country houses or purchased estates, only rarely were they attempting an entry into landed society and very few families abandoned trade.<sup>40</sup> 'Even when large houses in the country were bought, favoured sons allowed to lead a life of luxury, or daughters married off to the sons of county families, the links with business and the wealth it bestowed were too strong to be broken'.<sup>41</sup> However, Burnley's *Looking for the Dawn*, located in the late 1840s but written in the West Riding of the 1870s, does strike a contemporary warning note that industrial advancement could be jeopardised by sybaritic younger sons of his 'mill-ocracy' – the character Tom Ayrton perishes in an attempt to destroy his father's mill in order to collect the insurance payment.

Burnley's attitude towards the urban environment of the West Riding is ambivalent. He has dystopian passages describing the bleakness of life for working-class inhabitants of Woolborough.<sup>42</sup> Yet even this is tempered, as in this comment from one of the exiled Chartists when he returns from the USA:

'The town is very little altered... t'same griminess, t'same dirt and' blackness,, t'same big, frownin' factories, and t'same ugly, narrow streets... but wi' all its dirt and griminess an' ugliness, to me it's a bonny place yet'.<sup>43</sup>

The need for a compromise that harnessed the energy, the wealth creation and the possibilities for social mobility that the West Riding wool textile industry offered and yet provided more humane living conditions to workers led many writers to admire Titus Salt's factory and model village at Saltaire, constructed in the 1850s. Typical is this encomium, from travelogue writer Richard Jackson.

... the whole valley west of Leeds absolutely pales in the presence of Saltaire... The old monastery [Kirkstall] with four hundred years of wealth and possession, is a figment as compared with its influence. There is more power exerted daily at Saltaire than the monastery could ever exert in a twelvemonth. There is more learning diffused in its schools and its workshops than all the

37 D.F.E. Sykes, *Sister Gertrude, a Tale of the West Riding* (Huddersfield: Worker Press, 1908), pp.23-24.

38 Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit*, p.8.

39 Sheeran, *Brass Castles*, p.131.

40 Ibid., pp.137-139.

41 Ibid., p.140.

42 His *Phases of Bradford Life* also has some unflinching descriptions of working class living conditions, especially in the city's Irish quarter.

43 Burnley, *Looking for the Dawn*, p.337.

monasteries in Yorkshire possessed. There is more gain to the people it supports made weekly and more comfort distributed to the people it supplies than the whole monastery and baronial system of the country ever produced in any one year. There is more social progress stamped upon its cottage dwellings than all the bowers of Queens and palaces of Kings in Christendom can show in the aggregate of their power...<sup>44</sup>

James Burnley wrote an admiring biography of Titus Salt, with a chapter devoted to Saltaire. Burnley was untroubled by, indeed he approved of the paternalistic dimension to ‘this splendid industrial colony’ where Salt ‘wisely set [the residents] against the attractions of the public house, there being no place in the town where intoxicating liquors are permitted to be sold’.<sup>45</sup>

Contemporary industrial settings were relatively rare in nineteenth-century Yorkshire fiction but industry frequently had a phantom presence, unseen but unwelcome, warded off by a preoccupation with moorland life or a nostalgia for earlier modes of existence. This trope can be found in the work of several authors, including the best-selling William Riley, but most tellingly in the output of Halliwell Sutcliffe. At the end of the nineteenth century, he harked back to

the happy interval of hand-combing...when men could earn good wages by short days’ work, when they were not herded amongst the smoking loom racket of today, but worked in their own homes or in the large rooms known as ‘combing-shops’. Mirthful days they were, full of rollick and the careless sense that fortune had opened both hands wide.<sup>46</sup>

When E.P. Thompson analysed ‘historical consciousness’ in the West Riding of the late-nineteenth century he detected two leading characteristics. One was ‘an intense local patriotism’. The other was a sense of regret at the passing of a particular way of community life.

Liberal optimism about the march of improvement, the homilies about the benefits of free trade, and the congratulations that the hungry forties had been left far behind – all these are present but they are modified by a distinct nostalgia and a respect for the culture that has been lost.<sup>47</sup>

In particular, and as exemplified by the quote from Sutcliffe above, there was nostalgia for the domestic system of manufacture – carried out by woolcombers or weavers and their families in their own homes. Here, according to Thompson, the social gradations between master and skilled journeyman were gentle.<sup>48</sup> Handloom weaving remained an important element of the woollen industry until the 1840s.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, despite the fact that almost all of the processes in the woollen industry had been mechanised by mid-century, handloom weavers would be employed until at least the 1890s.<sup>50</sup> But in 1858 Edward Baines reported

44 Richard Jackson, *Jackson’s Handbook for Tourists in Yorkshire* (Leeds: Richard Jackson, 1891), p.298.

45 James Burnley, *Sir Titus Salt and George Moore* (London: Cassell, 1889), p.52.

46 Halliwell Sutcliffe, *By Moor and Fell – Landscapes and Lang-Settle Lore from West Yorkshire* (London, T.Fisher Unwin, 1899), p.86. The ‘happy interval’ of wool combing by hand began to decline in the 1840s and, wrote James Burnley, the extinction of hand combing was ‘practically accomplished’ after new English and French combing machines had been displayed at the Great Exhibition, 1851 – see Burnley, *History of Wool and Wool Combing*, pp.165-185.

47 E.P. Thompson, Introduction to fourth edition of Frank Peel, *The Risings of the Luddites, Chartists and Plug Drawers* (Abingdon: Frank Cass, 1968), pp.viii-ix.

48 Ibid. For Thompson’s analysis of the West Riding domestic system and its decline, see his *The Making of the English Working Class* (edition used here, New York: Vintage, 1966), pp.-268-313.

49 Ponting, Introduction to *Baines’s Account of Woollen Manufacture*, p.46. The worsted trade in the West Riding was widely mechanised before that of wool textiles.

50 Hey, *History of Yorkshire*, p.393.

that by then almost all of the trade was carried on in factories.

Here and there, in secluded dales branching out of the main valleys of the Aire and Calder, or on the lofty hill ranges which divide them, may be heard the weary click indicative of the hand-loom weaver's monotonous and ill-paid toil. But the application of steam to the manufacture made the extinction of domestic labour only a question of time. The yarn-spinners of the villages had no chance against the precise and rapid machinery of the towns...<sup>51</sup>

Baines, proprietor of the *Leeds Mercury* and Liberal MP, was an advocate of economic and technological development.<sup>52</sup> He was therefore unsentimental about vestiges of the domestic system. Other sources concur. Shortly before Halliwell Sutcliffe evoked the 'happy interval' of hand-combing, George Taylor had written about the hazards of the occupation, stemming from the vapours generated by charcoal and hot oil. An apologist for the factory system, he added that

nor was the occupation hurtful to the bodily health merely. Dirt and stench produced moral as well as physical degeneracy; and the men sought relief from the nausea of their work-rooms in the excesses of the ale-house. The feeling that there was something essentially wrong in the existence of such a state of things led many of the workers to give a willing ear to agitators who increased their discontent; and riots occurred on two or three occasions, which rendered it necessary to call in military aid.<sup>53</sup>

But, as Thompson suggested, there was also a strand of later-nineteenth century Yorkshire writing that expressed a kind of pained nostalgia for proto-industry, with the handloom weaver being the central figure. Indeed, according to Rawnsley, the handloom weaver, although facing extinction, was of political and cultural significance for he 'was an example in which a declining skill and increasing poverty in the face of new technology led to a fusion of real distress with a mythology of the past to create a version of northern labour'.<sup>54</sup>

In 1869 the Huddersfield author Alfred Lodge, who signed himself as 'A.L.', published *Forty Years Ago*, his evocation of life in a weaving community during the 1820s.<sup>55</sup> The village is named 'Burton-Kirk' and is a detailed depiction of Kirkburton, near Huddersfield. The novella reconstructs the routine of life led by handloom weavers as they prepare pieces of woollen cloth on their cottage looms and set out to sell them to the 'taker in' and to collect the weft they will use for their next week's work. Poverty is present but with its descriptions of woodland walks and gambolling lambs, there is an Arcadian quality to community life. There is also an element of 'Et in Arcadia ego', because tragedy strikes with the death of a local girl who had attached herself to a visiting mill manager whom locals referred to as 'the gentleman'. 'A.L.' followed *Forty Years Ago* with *Sad Times, a Tale of the Luddites* (1870), the main aim of which was again to recreate the life of old-time weaving communities and their customs, such as cottage dances and manner of

51 Edward Baines, *An Account of Woollen Manufacture of England* (from a paper read to the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Leeds, 1858, reprinted New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1970), p.135.

52 See J.R. Lowerson, 'Baines, Sir Edward (1800-1890)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), [<http://oxforddnb.com/view/article/1090>] accessed 6 Feb 2009.

53 George Taylor, *Bradford and the Worst of Manufacture* (Bradford, 1898), p.10.

54 Rawnsley, 'Constructing "The North"', p.7.

55 A.L., *Forty Years Ago. A Sketch of Huddersfield Life and Poems* (Huddersfield: Jos Woodhead, 1869). The author dedicates the book to his brother H.B. Lodge, so he is identifiable as A. Lodge, the author of *Sad Times. A Tale of the Luddites* (1870).

marking Bonfire Night. The Luddite episode might have been tragic, but so was the loss of proto-industrial community life.

Recalling her childhood in Shipley of the late 1830s, the émigré author Amelia E. Barr recalled that the domestic system of handloom weaving still predominated.

I have never seen a prouder or more independent class of men than these home weavers; and just at this time they had been made anxious and irritable by the constant reports of coming mills and weaving by machinery. But their religion kept them hopeful and confident, for they were all Methodists...<sup>56</sup>

In his novel *The Web of an Old Weaver* (1896), author-journalist James Keighley Snowden (1860-1947) created an 1840s West Riding community named Craggside, in which handloom weaving was still the principal means of livelihood, although the power loom was a threat to this mode of existence. Snowden presented his novel, written in 'Yorkshire English', as a genuine piece of autobiography, of which he was the editor. As in Lodge's *Forty Years Ago*, a discrete working-class community is described. There is an element of nostalgia in *The Web of an old Weaver*, but it is tempered:

Weaving is a simpler job with power-loom, and an easier; that is all. But, bless me, with hand-loom it was horse-work. There are cotton weavers in Lancashire that think they are punished because they have to stand more nor eight hours in a day and see their work done for them. Why, we thought little in them days of tewing away, week in week out, for fourteen or fifteen hours, taking our meals where we sat... 'Horse work' have I written? Horses are better done by. I ponder on it and I hardly credit what I know to be true. It is not to tell how men lived so.<sup>57</sup>

At the end of the book the narrator tells how the handloom shed in Craggside stayed in business for some years, until power looms finally arrived – and with them a better wage.<sup>58</sup>

Texts such as those described above, which seek to recreate, with conditioned nostalgia, a proto-industrial life that was still within living memory, form a bridge between industrial West Riding fiction – such as *Looking for the Dawn* – and a genre which seeks to marginalise industry or keep it quite literally out of sight. The most commercially successful of the Yorkshire novels included in this survey was William Riley's *Windyridge* (1912). Written as a first person narrative it is the story of a London-based commercial artist, Grace Holden, who conceives an impulse to hear a Yorkshire choir sing in a summer festival and travels north to the fictionalised town of Airlee, based on Bradford, for that purpose.<sup>59</sup> Her motivation, presented as impulsive but unremarkable, provides evidence for the synonymy of Yorkshire with excellence in choral singing at this period. After hearing the concert – in an opening chapter entitled 'The Call of the Heather' – she travels by tram and foot to escape the city but her search for a non-urban West Riding looks doomed. 'When the country was reached – if the bleak and sad-looking fields could be called country – the mill chimneys were just as evident. They were everywhere, even on the horizon, and my spirits sank'.<sup>60</sup> Eventually, however, Grace discovers the hamlet of Windyridge, where there is a cottage to let. She acquires it and sets up a studio, but hesitates for a long time before exploring the moors outside her cottage, in case, over

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56 Barr, *All the Days of My Life*, p.14.

57 J. Keighley Snowden, *The Web of an Old Weaver* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1896), p.66.

58 Ibid., p.191.

59 W. Riley, *Windyridge* (orig pub.1912; third edition, London: Herbert Jenkins, 1913), pp.4-5.

60 Riley, *Windyridge*, p.5.



the brow of the hill, the dreaded industry is apparent again. Eventually, Grace does take a moorland ramble and her fears are allayed. 'That night no vision of factory chimneys disturbed the serenity of my sleep, for a haunting fear had been dispelled'.<sup>61</sup> Grace finds romance with a man she dubs 'The Cynic'. He is the product of a local manufacturing family but he has become a barrister with a London practice. His profession meant that he could participate in the 'cultural containment of industrial capitalism', as Wiener puts it.<sup>62</sup> The family enterprise that had made the fortune which enabled him to enter the law could safely be kept at arm's length.

William Riley [Figure 1] was born in Bradford and in his autobiography he described the city of his Victorian youth with a mixture of revulsion and pride.<sup>63</sup> His father was a self-made man who achieved success in the textile industry before becoming bankrupt, a possible explanation for Riley's disillusion with heavy industry. William Riley himself managed a successful firm that supplied the material for lantern shows, until it was forced out of business in the First World War and he became a full-time writer. *Windyridge* had been written as a hobby, as the means of entertaining two female friends of the family who had suffered bereavement. 'I think I'll bring some London girl on a visit to Yorkshire and see how she gets on', was his explanation of the genesis of the novel.<sup>64</sup> Riley was a devout Methodist and there are many episodes of religiosity in *Windyridge*. But there is also, perhaps unconsciously, an almost pantheistic, even sensual attitude towards the moorland environment. 'How sweet the breath of the air was as it covered my cheeks with its caresses! I tasted the fragrance of it and it gave buoyancy to my body, and the wings of a dove to my soul'.<sup>65</sup> This heightened worship of moorland and heather would be an important feature of the works of Halliwell Sutcliffe. But it occurs in other texts by Yorkshire writers. In his short-story collection *Idylls of Yorkshire*, Hubert Clouesley made an attempt to eroticise the moors, when a young man kept apart from his lover exclaimed:

How glad I was to be on the broad moorland. I drank my fill of beauty. I breathed into my lungs the balmy air. Presently I threw myself face downwards on to the bosom of the moor. I embraced it with outstretched arms, and let my lips come into contact with the heather blossoms. It seemed as if I was being kissed by the pure red lips of a maid...<sup>66</sup>

Riley's *Windyridge* would sell some 300,000 copies.<sup>67</sup> Yorkshire people around the world



**Figure 1:** William Riley, author of the best-selling *Windyridge*. Picture taken from his 1957 autobiography.

61 Ibid., p.57.

62 Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit*, p.15.

63 Riley, *Sunset Reflections*, pp.13-23.

64 Ibid., p.98.

65 Riley, *Windyridge*, p.53. At the start of his autobiography Riley wrote in similarly rapturous tones about the impact that an early encounter with the scenery of the Yorkshire Dales had made on him – Riley, *Sunset Reflections*, pp. 9-12.

66 Hubert Clouesley, *Idylls of Yorkshire* (Elland: Henry Watson, edition undated [BL gives 1900]), p.83.

67 This was the figure that the publisher Herbert Jenkins gave on the dust jacket of Riley's autobiography, published in 1957. Several obituaries of Riley four years later gave the figure 500,000, which might have been journalistic exaggeration. The autobiography describes the impact made by *Windyridge* in 1912 – in-

named their houses after the novel.<sup>68</sup> This suggests that its vision of a self-contained, self-supporting community of eccentric individuals on the edge of the moors and well-distant from the scene of industrialisation became the single most favoured literary self-definition of the county. Riley wrote 34 more books – many of them religious in content – and his publisher would describe him simply as ‘The Yorkshire Novelist’.<sup>69</sup>

As observed earlier, social fluency based on financial success was a frequent feature of West Riding novels of the later nineteenth century. James Burnley’s fictional ideal was that the landed gentry and the entrepreneurial class should unite. When he wrote in quasi-journalistic mode, he marginalised the former. ‘There is no aristocracy in Woolborough,’ Burnley proclaimed in his *West Riding Sketches*.<sup>70</sup> He did go on to provide a guide

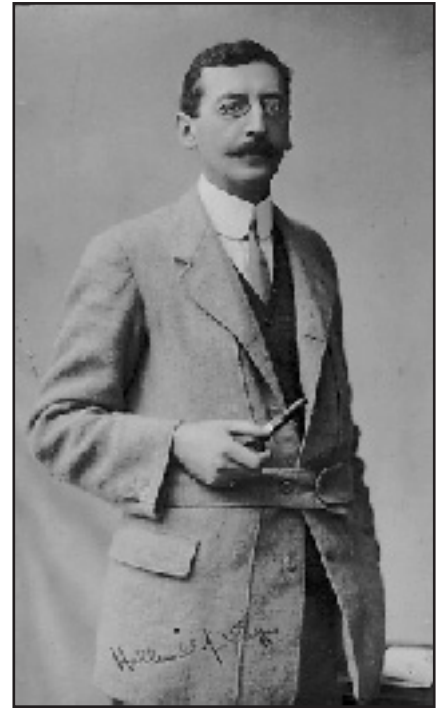


Figure 2: Halliwell Sutcliffe.

to an intricate caste system for which ‘a cash reputation’ was the only ‘Open Sesame’ to its upper echelons. But when William Riley, more than a quarter of century later, came to write *Windyridge*, located little more than a tram ride away from an industrial centre, he portrayed a local society, structured on traditional lines, with a squire at its head, despite the proximity of factory chimneys. The mill-ocracy – to which Riley’s father had belonged – is absent and its mills are kept safely beyond the horizon.

The novelist who most exemplified resistance to industrial encroachment and the preservation of quasi-feudalism in moorland society was Halliwell Sutcliffe (1870-1932 [Figure 2]). A schoolmaster’s son, he was born in Bingley but moved to Haworth as a child. ‘It could be claimed that he was more “Haworth” than the Brontës,’ it was stated after his death.<sup>71</sup> Haworth had become a literary shrine within the lifetime of Charlotte Brontë (died 1855).<sup>72</sup> Its status as a destination for trippers would certainly have been evident to the young Halliwell Sutcliffe and it irritated him slightly, as a passage from 1899 suggests:

Strangers come and go, thinking that the Brontës gave Haworth all its charm; but we who know it, whose fathers knew it before it was in touch with the outer world, have no sense of this sort; for before the Brontës crept into its life, to observe, and shiver a little, and reproduce, the village was hoary with storm and legend, instinct with the glamour which today is strong upon its children...<sup>73</sup>

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cluding reporters seeking out the originals for the characters in the novel and the creation of a mini-tourist industry in Haworth. Also, Riley was in demand to give lectures about the origins of his book.

68 Obit, William Riley, *Yorkshire Post*, 6 June, 1961. See also Riley’s *Sunset Reflections*, p.102. In May 1977 the *Yorkshire Post* felt that it was newsworthy to report that the cottage at Haworth near Baildon, on which *Windyridge* was based, was up for sale.

69 Publisher’s advertisement in William Riley, *Windyridge Revisited* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1928)

70 Burnley, *West Riding Sketches*, p.42.

71 Norman Thornber, ‘Halliwell Sutcliffe: A Man of the Moors’, *The Dalesman*, Vol 1, No 4 (July, 1939), pp.22-23.

72 See Patsy Stoneman, ‘The Brontë Myth’, in Heather Glen (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to The Brontës* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.218.

73 Sutcliffe, *By Moor and Fell*, p.12.

Sutcliffe, a long-standing member of the Brontë Society, did greatly admire the literary sisters, although he alleged that Charlotte had ‘little understanding of the moors and the moor folk’.<sup>74</sup> He believed that Emily was the greatest of the three, ‘who nursed her lonely passion for the moors until it brought forth the most stupendous book that ever startled, or shocked, or gladdened, a world that for the most part could not understand its message’.<sup>75</sup>

Halliwell Sutcliffe and other Yorkshire writers who celebrated and mythologised the moors can be seen as a consequence of *Wuthering Heights*. But there has been debate over the extent to which that novel should be seen as regional fiction. Phyllis Bentley argued that although *Wuthering Heights* was an ‘incomparably greater work’ than Charlotte Brontë’s *Shirley*, it is ‘not nearly as regional’.

The setting, of course, is superbly regional; the pictures of the West Riding moors in all their moods are magnificent literature and magnificent regionalism. But of the characters, only one, the horrid old manservant Joseph, is completely Yorkshire and speaks Yorkshire dialect; the others belong mostly to an age, the 18<sup>th</sup> century, rather than to a place, while Heathcliff hails from an unknown clime. The plot has nothing regional about it, and could have occurred anywhere. The theme is love turning to hate turning to revenge, about which there is nothing specifically Yorkshire. Neither the land nor the trade of the district plays any part in the action.<sup>76</sup>

W. J. Keith has disputed Bentley’s ‘uncharacteristically imperceptive’ analysis. ‘The regional quality of *Wuthering Heights* is stamped upon the very texture of the book’.<sup>77</sup> Phyllis Bentley was indeed very rigorous in her definition of regionalism, but I would concur with her analysis of *Wuthering Heights*. A rereading of the novel reveals it to be less quintessentially ‘Yorkshire’ than its reputation would suggest (it is very easy, for example, to imagine its narrative being transplanted to Hardy’s Wessex). But its reputation for Yorkshiredness was acquired early and bolstered to some extent by Emily’s sister Charlotte, who, writing as Currer Bell, furnished a preface to an 1850 edition of the novel, writing that she had now gained a definite notion of how *Wuthering Heights* would appear to people ‘who are unacquainted with the locality where the scenes of the story are laid; to whom the inhabitants, the customs, the natural characteristics of the outlying hills and hamlets in the West-Riding of Yorkshire are things alien and unfamiliar’.<sup>78</sup>

When Elizabeth Gaskell wrote her *Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857) she did much to reinforce the socially primordial image of Haworth and its hinterland.

Isolated as the hill villages may be, they are in the world, compared with the loneliness of the grey ancestral houses to be seen here and there in the dense hollows of the moors... there are those remaining of this class – dwellers in the lonely houses far away in the upland districts – even at the present day, who sufficiently indicate what strange eccentricity – what wild strength of will – nay, even what unnatural power of crime was fostered by a mode of living in which a man seldom met his fellows and where public opinion was only a distant and inarticulate echo of some clearer voice sounding behind the sweeping horizon.<sup>79</sup>

This not only provides a basis for understanding Emily Brontë’s fiction, but it also serves

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<sup>74</sup> Sutcliffe, *By Moor and Fell*, p.13.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Bentley, *English Regional Novel*, p.17. Bentley argued (p.14) that *Shirley* was the first great English regional novel.

<sup>77</sup> Keith, *Regions of the Imagination*, p.45.

<sup>78</sup> Charlotte Brontë, Editor’s Preface to 1850 edition of Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (edition used, London: Collins, 1973), p.27.

<sup>79</sup> Gaskell, *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, p.16.

as a manifesto for the most characteristic works of Halliwell Sutcliffe, who began his career as an author in 1894. He would publish 45 books, mostly novels but some non-fiction, including descriptions of Yorkshire landscapes and customs.<sup>80</sup> His range was wide. His first novel, *Baron Verdigris* (1894) was a science fiction story about time travel. A *Bachelor in Arcady* (1904) was a whimsical love story set in Wharfedale. Several novels derived from Sutcliffe's fascination for the 1745 Jacobite rebellion. These included *Ricroft of Withens* (1898) which, by a huge plot contrivance, succeeds in having Charles Edward Stuart make a solo detour into the West Riding during his retreat northwards.

Sutcliffe's interest in the Jacobite cause led him to draw parallels between Scots and Yorkshire people. In *Ricroft of Withens*, when a Stanbury innkeeper defends the English, the Young Pretender retorts: 'Why, you are not English, bless you. There is chalk and cheese difference between Scots and English, and you are Scotch to the marrow up here'.<sup>81</sup> In a non-fiction work Sutcliffe explored this theory more fully:

The temper of all the [West Riding] moorland folk is singularly in harmony with that of their [Scottish] cousins farther north. They have the same dry wit, the same keen scent for a bargain and generous sense of hospitality, the same grim acceptance of hardship; each race works the better in face of hindrances, and each has shown its power to climb head and shoulders above the struggling press of men more delicately nurtured. Even in speech we are curiously allied, and the old Haworth tongue merges, though scarce perceptible gradations of North-country dialects, into the different forms of Lowland speech. This kinship between the two races is no accident; it shows natural enough in the light of history... And so the true division of the countries – the racial division – is measured not by Tweed, but by the Humber... It is this which has given the Yorkshireman his outlook on the Southerner, and to this day he regards him from the half-impatient, half-curious standpoint of one who visits a foreign country, and finds the people using a quaint speech and following unexpected habits...<sup>82</sup>

Sutcliffe's suggestion that the North-South divide within England was more profound than that between the North of England and Scotland is an interesting contribution to the shifting nature of regional and national identities within the United Kingdom. Some unwitting support for Sutcliffe's theory came in a scathing review of *Ricroft of Withens* in which the writer seemed not to have grasped that the novel was set in Yorkshire among almost exclusively Yorkshire people. 'I simply detest these Scottish heroines,' wrote the reviewer, referring to Sutcliffe's female lead, the daughter of a West Riding squire.<sup>83</sup>

Sutcliffe enjoyed popular success with some of his adventure fiction, mainly inspired by stories of Yorkshire moorland family feuds, some of which, he claimed, continued well into the nineteenth century.<sup>84</sup> His lurid novel *Shameless Wayne* (1900) was dramatised by schoolboys at Eton and a version of *Ricroft of Withens* was broadcast by the BBC from Leeds.<sup>85</sup> Sutcliffe, although he lived in Yorkshire for most of his life, became a member of

80 For a chronological list of Sutcliffe's work and an outline biography, see Alan J. Umpleby, *A Tribute to the Yorkshire Author Halliwell Sutcliffe 1870-1932* (pub: Strawberry House; no location given and booklet undated).

81 Halliwell Sutcliffe, *Ricroft of Withens* (London, Fisher Unwin, 1898). p.180.

82 Sutcliffe, *By Moor and Fell*, p.83.

83 Sarah Volatile, review of 'Ricroft of Withens' in *Hearth and Home*, 2 February 1899. This presumably pseudonymous reviewer was, however, correct in noting the many plot and character similarities between Sutcliffe's novel and R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* (1869).

84 Sutcliffe, *By Moor and Fell*, p.73.

85 Thornber, 'A Man of the Moors'. No dates are provided for these events.



the literary establishment, succeeding Rider Haggard to the Council of the Authors' Club.<sup>86</sup> The novels of Halliwell Sutcliffe, therefore, were a significant agency for the propagation of the image and identity of Yorkshire from the 1890s well into the twentieth century.

His publishers summed up Sutcliffe as 'the novelist of the moorland', whose stories 'convey a free, clear breeze from the moors and leave one quickened and strengthened to face the grey everyday of life'.<sup>87</sup> Sutcliffe displayed consistent contempt for the industrialisation of the West Riding. Life and society on the moors – while it might have been violent and impassioned – was portrayed as morally superior to that in the towns. In *Lasses Love* (1918), a novel set in the 1840s, a moor dweller forced to visit the town of 'Brantside' expresses loathing of the 'mean streets and the din of factories that broke men's souls'.

We're living in quiet, peaceable days. The feuds are done with – unless they propose to build one of their cursed mills within the borders of the parish. Then there'd be a pleasant battle again.<sup>88</sup>

Such anti-industrial sentiment is common in Sutcliffe's work, especially in his quintessential *A Man of the Moors* (1897), which depicts moor dwellers as physically and morally superior specimens to those from the towns of Yorkshire and from the south of England generally. The heroine is 'one of the fine moor breed' whose socially humble background is irrelevant when she marries the hero, Griff Lomax. 'You might have married well, Griff', his mother ventures. 'Mother, that is not like you. Leave distinctions of that kind to people who cannot claim five hundred years of moor life'.<sup>89</sup> When gamblers 'from the little manufacturing towns that encroached on the furthest limits of the heath' assemble on the moors they are described with quasi-racist contempt: 'Town-bred, they were for the most, stunted and sickly bodied; they spoke the uncouth, hybrid Yorkshire of the streets, not the rich Doric of the moor folk'.<sup>90</sup> This pseudo-anthropological observation is reminiscent of a comment by Dr John Beddoe, referring to 'a change of type' in Yorkshire's large towns – 'a change in the direction of narrower heads and darker hair, which may or may not be called a degeneration'.<sup>91</sup>

Sutcliffe seems to have been a dutiful churchgoer,<sup>92</sup> but his moorland pantheism was strong. 'No words can touch this feeling a moor man has for his country; it is a religion he never seeks to express'.<sup>93</sup> Often, the moors were personified. While Griff Lomax was in London 'the still, small voice of the moors grew louder. He yearned for the wide-eyed hill spaces, where the heather was free to stretch away and away till it gained the far skyline'.<sup>94</sup> On his return home Griff asks his mother, 'May I go out and chat with the moors? I won't be long away' and in his authorial voice Sutcliffe asserts that 'The heath admits

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86 Ibid.

87 Publisher's advertisement in Halliwell Sutcliffe, *Lasses Love* (London: Ward Lock, 1918).

88 Sutcliffe, *Lasses Love*, p.127.

89 Halliwell Sutcliffe, *A Man of the Moors* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench Trübner and Co, 1897), p.108.

90 Sutcliffe, *Man of the Moors*, p.244. In his non-fiction *By Moor and Fell* (p.12) Sutcliffe complained that the dialect of Haworth was 'losing its Doric dignity, by contact with the debased speech of the towns'.

91 Beddoe and Rowe, 'The Ethnology of West Yorkshire', 50.

92 See Umpleby, *A Tribute to the Yorkshire Author Halliwell Sutcliffe*.

93 Sutcliffe, *A Man of the Moors*, p.11

94 Ibid., p.8.

few to its fellowship, but it never falters in its choice'.<sup>95</sup> Much of this was purple-prosed literary affectation, but the cumulative effect of Sutcliffe's body of fiction located on the Haworth moors was to create a sense that the uplands of West Yorkshire were morally, religiously, socially and even racially apart from the rest of the region and the rest of the nation. When this is added to the similar, if less extreme sentiments expressed in Riley's best-selling *Windyridge*, and in the works of lesser authors such as Cloudesley, and if it is regarded as a superstructure added to foundations laid by Emily Brontë, it will be seen that fiction set on the Yorkshire moors was a powerful element in the propagation of the county's cultural identity in the later-nineteenth and early-twentieth century.

### 3. Dialect strategies

WHEN R. D. Blackmore was writing *Mary Anerley* in 1879 he took his usual trouble over regional dialect and sought advice from a Yorkshire acquaintance, writing that 'a Yorkshire tale without dialect is nothing worth'.<sup>96</sup> In the event, Blackmore settled for a compromise. In the finished novel he tells readers that

Flamburians speak a rich burr of their own, broadly and handsomely distinct from that of outer Yorkshire... But alas! These merits of their speech cannot be embodied in print, without sad trouble and result (if successful) still more saddening.<sup>97</sup>

Regional novelists of the nineteenth century frequently faced the need to develop a dialect strategy. On the one hand, a regional novel without regional dialect was 'nothing worth' and industrial novelists in particular strove to achieve the same accuracy in their presentation of local speech that they aspired in other aspects of their fiction.<sup>98</sup> On the other hand, excessive use of dialect, involving complex orthography, might alienate readers and reviewers. As Beal has put it, 'The main problem for any author wishing to represent a non-standard dialect is the need to strike a balance between accuracy and accessibility'.<sup>99</sup>

Charlotte Brontë was aware of this problem. While preparing a new edition of her sister Emily's *Wuthering Heights* she argued in correspondence that it might be advisable to 'modify the orthography of the old servant Joseph's speeches, for though, as it stands, it exactly renders the Yorkshire accent to a Yorkshire ear – yet I am sure Southerners must find it unintelligible and thus one of the most graphic characters in the book is lost on them'.<sup>100</sup> When Elizabeth Gaskell, with customary conscientiousness, attempted to reproduce the speech of the north Yorkshire coast in her 1863 novel *Sylvia's Lovers*, one reviewer

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p.10.

<sup>96</sup> Letter from R.D.Blackmore to Arthur Munby, 12 March, 1879, in W.H. Dunn, *R.D. Blackmore* (London: Robert Hale, 1956), p.163.

<sup>97</sup> R.D. Blackmore, *Mary Anerley, A Yorkshire Tale* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1880), p.61.

<sup>98</sup> Patricia Ingham, 'Dialect as "Realism": "Hard Times" and the Industrial Novel', *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, Vol 37, No 148 (Nov, 1986), 518-527.

<sup>99</sup> Joan C. Beal, *Language and Region* (London: Routledge, 2006), p.82.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Juliet Barker, *The Brontës : A Life in Lettters* (London: Viking, 1997), p.301. Charlotte Brontë's amendments were incorporated in some editions of *Wuthering Heights*. Melchers alleges that she did 'more harm than good, creating a mixed, artificial and inconsistent dialect' – Gunnel Melchers, 'Mrs Gaskell and Dialect', in Mats Ryden and Lennart A. Bjork (eds), *Studies in English Philology, Linguistics and Literature, Presented to Alarik Rynell* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1978), p 116.

responded that ‘the continual use of the common dialect of the north-eastern shores of England is both useless and fatiguing’.<sup>101</sup> Other critics concurred, although another felt that ‘the Yorkshire dialect of nearly all the dialogues is so skillfully managed, that without being a stumbling-block to any reader, it gives the charm of a Doric simplicity to the whole tale’.<sup>102</sup>

The use of attempted realism in dialogue is a defining feature of the regional novel and in an age before recorded sound and modern oral history, few sources can compare with regional fiction for representations of local language and speech, as Snell has argued.<sup>103</sup> Gaskell and Blackmore were two examples of regional novelists who, to varying degrees, attempted to achieve authenticity in their representation of dialect – in their cases, the dialect of the North Riding coast. Many writers were less rigorous. Mugglestone has noted how novelists such as Dickens would delineate accents, using spelling and punctuation, in ways that were ‘more often impressionistic than entirely systematic’.<sup>104</sup> The term ‘eye-dialect’ has been coined for this and it would probably have earned the contempt of James Burnley, who wrote that

There are many obstacles in the way of a novelist who desires to introduce a Yorkshire character into a work of fiction, for to be faithful in the one manner of speech would probably prove fatal to the acceptability of the novel by the non-Yorkshire public. What is to be condemned is the repeated introduction of Yorkshire characters in fiction and upon the stage, and the palming them off as the genuine article ...<sup>105</sup>

Burnley was particularly scornful of the way in which Yorkshire characters were represented theatrically:

The dialect most commonly adopted ... is that of Zummerzet, to which is added a dash of the Irish brogue; but of the real, weighty, Chaucerian English, of the hearty, nervous pronunciation, which forms the distinctive features of the language of the Yorkshire rustic, I have found but little trace in the speech of the numerous theatrical representatives of Yorkshiremen whom I have hitherto seen.<sup>106</sup>

Sabine Baring-Gould (1834–1924), the clergyman, author, hymnologist and folklorist whose clerical career began with a curacy in Horbury, took pains to reproduce dialect in his Yorkshire novels, non-fiction and autobiographical reminiscences. In his 1889 novel *The Pennycomequicks* he adopted the tactic of explaining Yorkshire dialect words or phonetically-spelt pronunciations by inserting the Standard English equivalent in a bracket. For example: ‘Ah reckon ah hugged (drew) thee aht o’t water mysen. Ah saw thee floatin’ by on tha’rig (back) taizled like I’ an owd tree. Sea (so) I had thee aht I’ a jiffy.’<sup>107</sup> This

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101 From the *Observer*, 1863, quoted in L. Mugglestone, *Talking Proper: The Rise of Accent as a Social Symbol* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.183. Also quoted by Mugglestone is the opinion of novelist Geraldine Jewsbury in the *Athenaeum*, that using the ‘broad vernacular Yorkshire dialect’ although giving ‘local colour’ was ‘a drawback to the comfort of the reader and fatiguing to the eye’.

102 *The Examiner*, 28 March 1863.

103 Snell, ‘The regional novel’, pp.32-33.

104 Mugglestone, *Talking Proper*, p.183. But Patricia Ingham has shown that when he wrote *Hard Times*, Dickens strove for accuracy– see Ingham, ‘Dialect as “Realism” ’.

105 Burnley, *West Riding Sketches*, p.26.

106 *Ibid.*, p.9. In *Across the Broad Acres, being Sketches of Yorkshire Life and Character* (London: A.Brown and Sons, 1909), the Rev A.N. Cooper wrote (p.4): ‘Whereas you may hear on the stage excellent mimics of the Irish brogue or the Cockney accent, nobody has ever been able to speak good broad Yorkshire dialect’.

107 Sabine Baring-Gould, *The Pennycomequicks* (London: Spencer, Blackett and Hallam, 1889), p.239.

didactic device – also used extensively by the East Riding novelist Edward C. Booth<sup>108</sup> – is comparable to Gaskell's use of footnotes in *Mary Barton*, although the effect can be patronising, as is the case with an experiment Baring-Gould conducted in his *Yorkshire Oddities*, when he reproduced a poem by the 'Burns of Bradford', Ben Preston, but altered some of the orthography 'for the benefit of readers who are not Yorkshiremen. To give it as it stands would be to deny them the pleasure of reading an exquisite poem'.<sup>109</sup> Baring-Gould's amendments are modest,<sup>110</sup> but the point is made that dialect, as rendered in print, is highly malleable. Examples of lexical dialect, of the sort compiled in glossaries of 'folk talk', are far outnumbered by morphical dialect, that is to say Standard English words spelt phonetically in imitation of a local accent. Therefore, Yorkshire regional novelists could devise their own orthographies and their own 'strengths' of dialect, perhaps judging their market.

Halliwell Sutcliffe, a full-time writer whose books were marketed to a nationwide readership, adopted a form of dialect which, after brief acclimatisation, would be readily comprehensible. But a more rigorous dialect strategy seems to have been adopted by authors whose readership was more likely to have been regional.<sup>111</sup> James Burnley's *Looking for the Dawn* was one of several novels in this survey which bear the imprint of two publishers, one in Yorkshire and one in London, with the London firm of Simpkin, Marshall entering into several such arrangements.<sup>112</sup> The implication is that this firm specialised in tie-ups with regional publishers. As Peter Keating has pointed out, regional publishing thrived in the Victorian period, with active publishers in many English cities, offering unprecedented opportunities for local authors.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, regionally published novels seemed to require the imprimatur of a London publisher, perhaps to add literary credibility as much as for commercial advantage. Very often the use of dialect in these primarily regional publications makes greater demands of the reader. James Burnley, true to his creed, attempts to reproduce the speech of the Bradford working class very closely, as in this exchange between the weaver Bethel Rayner and his wife Dorothy, after a child has gone missing:

'Sewerlee to man, t'little tyke hezzant goan aht o' t'hahse!'. 'Eh! Bethel!' cried Dorothy... 'th'art as sewer to be t'end o' me as my name's what it is. Nobbut to think 'at I left two upgrown fowk i' t'hahse – nivver to mention one on 'em bein' aht o' wark – an nawther on ye has hed gumption eniff to lewk after t'poor barn'.<sup>114</sup>

108 See, for example, Edward C. Booth, *The Cliff End* (London: Grant Richards, 1908).

109 Baring-Gould, *Yorkshire Oddities*, p.270. The poem was Preston's *Ah Nivver Can Call Her My Wife*, anthologised in Ben Preston, *Dialect and Other Poems* (London: Simpkin Marshall; Bradford: T.Brear, 1881), pp.17-18.

110 One of Baring-Gould's concerns was to restore 'missing' aspirates. This was one aspect of dialect speech that might have most disturbed standard English speakers and readers in the later nineteenth century. Mugglestone has a large amount of material on this in *Talking Proper*, Chapter 3.

111 Beal has commented (*Language and Region*, p.82) that 'if the text is intended for a local readership, the author can afford to give a much fuller portrayal of the dialect'.

112 E.G. *Looking for the Dawn* gives Simpkin, Marshall & Co of London and T.Brear, of Bradford. Burnley's; Bank's *Wooers and Winners* gives Simpkin, Marshall of London and Abel Heywood of Manchester; John Bowling's *Brailsford: A Tale of the West Riding* gives Simpkin, Marshall of London and Walker and Laycock of Leeds; D.F. E Sykes's *Ben O'Bills the Luddite* gives Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co of London plus The Advertiser Press, Huddersfield.

113 Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1989), p.331.

114 Burnley, *Looking for the Dawn*, p.21.



The works of Alfred Lodge ('A.L.'), an author whose books *Sad Times* and *Forty Years Ago* had Huddersfield publishers only on their imprint, pursued perhaps the most rigorous dialect strategy of all, almost calculated to deter a wider readership, with some very unusual orthography. For example: 'Hod dy din, Bary, by dlass; hod dy din; it's bary weel it's noea war; let's goea intuit th' haes dlass'.<sup>115</sup> As a generalisation, in Yorkshire regional novels dialect is spoken by working class, servile and secondary characters – Joseph in *Wuthering Heights* is the exemplar – whilst the middle class and upper class characters speak Standard English. But the picture is complicated by the phenomenon of bi-dialectism and by the fact that authors were reluctant to depict a beautiful, intelligent working class woman who spoke in dialect. In Burnley's *Looking for the Dawn* the heroine, Lizzie Rayner, is the daughter of working-class parents who speak broad dialect. She herself speaks Standard English, and even corrects the syntax of her co-workers. An explanation for this is provided, that Lizzie was a particularly apt pupil at evening classes. Repeatedly, Yorkshire authors – however democratic their instincts or how great their regional pride – were incapable of equating feminine charm with regional speech. In Sutcliffe's *A Man of the Moors*, the tragic heroine Kate speaks Standard English, despite being the estranged wife of a rough quarryman. The title character in Blackmore's *Mary Anerley*, despite being the daughter of dialect-speaking North Riding farmers, speaks what is revealingly described as 'the very best in Southern English'.<sup>116</sup> In Alfred Colbeck's *Scarlea Grange, or A Luddite's Daughter* (1893), the beautiful daughter of an out-of-work weaver habitually speaks in a refined fashion. The explanation furnished here is that as a child she had been taken under the vicar's wing and 'was thereby distinctly raised above the level of the village maidens with whom, as a child, she had been associated'.<sup>117</sup> Katherine McQuoid's *Doris Barugh* (1878) is a more thought-provoking example of this syndrome. The title character, a beautiful 15-year-old girl who speaks the same broad Yorkshire dialect as her father, catches the eye of Squire Burneston, who grooms her to be his future wife, sending her to a London boarding school where she is soon transformed:

Often to herself the schoolmistress wondered how it was that this farmer's daughter had so rapidly shot out of the sheath of ignorance and broad speech which had at first separated her from her schoolfellows, and had now distanced them all in any study to which she chose to apply herself.<sup>118</sup>

But Doris's transformed station in life ends tragically, with the death of her child. The book concludes with a religious homily, in broad Yorkshire, from her father. Dialect could be used for sentiment and rough wisdom as well as the comic and grotesque.

In many cases there were probably pragmatic reasons for the authorial tendency to declass or deregionalise – the two terms are usually synonymous<sup>119</sup> – the speech of certain characters. Katie Wales suggests that 'writing the dialogue of hero and heroine in standard English aided intelligibility, however unrealistic sociolinguistically speaking'.<sup>120</sup>

115 A.L., *Sad Times*, p.18.

116 Blackmore, *Mary Anerley*, p.31.

117 Alfred Colbeck, *Scarlea Grange or A Luddite's Daughter* (London: The Religious Tract Society, edition undated [BL gives 1893]), p.23.

118 Katherine S. McQuoid, *Doris Barugh: A Yorkshire Story* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1878), p.79.

119 Class dialects 'are always associated in some way with regional dialect', according to M.F. Wakelin in *English Dialects* (London: Athlone, 1972), p.4

120 Katie Wales, *Northern English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.121.

But there was also an equation of intelligence and physical attractiveness with regionally unspecific Standard English. As a consequence, heroines and heroes might be exempted from the demands of linguistic versimilitude.<sup>121</sup> Mugglestone notes that ‘by the end of the nineteenth century, popular notions of “educatedness” were... strongly associated with the possession of a particular set of pronunciation features.’<sup>122</sup> This attitude persists today, but in Victorian regional novels, the issue was a live one, for they were written in the period when the search for a codification of spoken and written Standard English was a significant project, culminating in the genesis of the Oxford English Dictionary.<sup>123</sup> Crowley writes that ‘social snobbery, class identification and differentiation, national pride: such were the dominant forces which attempted to abolish heteroglossia in favour of a stable, confident and exclusive monoglossia which was tied to a new class’.<sup>124</sup>

In the preface to his 1900 collection *Idylls of Yorkshire*, Hubert Cloudesley apologised for the absence of dialect in many of his stories. This was because, he said, they mostly dealt with middle-class life, the implication being that by the end of the century Yorkshire’s middle classes had shed most of their regional speech patterns.<sup>125</sup> However, Yorkshire regional novels do provide evidence that among the middle and even the upper classes, dialect speech and bi-dialectism persisted during the nineteenth century. In the preface to his 1891 novel *The Bantams of Sheffield*, Guy Balguy told readers that he would pursue a *via media* when it came to the use of dialect but added that he had ‘found it impossible to leave out the manner of speech of some of the middle classes prevalent not many years ago’.<sup>126</sup> The character of Dandelow Bantam, from a prosperous steel manufacturing family, ‘had an undisguised preference for the good old Sheffield vernacular’ although he could also speak florid Standard English.<sup>127</sup>

Patrick Joyce has written that, ‘It is quite clear that dialect was spoken by a wide range of the middle-class, among whom regional characteristics of speech are indeed still marked, especially in the north. This was to some extent a matter of degree and of strategy’.<sup>128</sup> It was strategy that had prompted the bi-dialectism of the title character in Robert Southey’s *The Doctor* (1848).

His profession led him among all classes and his temper as well as his education qualified him to sympathise with all... Yet he was everywhere the same man; he spoke the King’s English in one circle, and the King’s Yorkshire in another; but this was the only difference in his conversation with high and low.<sup>129</sup>

Yorkshire regional fiction of the Victorian and Edwardian period furnishes many examples of characters who adjust their mode of speech in this way. In a story set in the 1840s, Mary Beaumont (1849-1910) wrote of a squire that ‘It was Mr Bentham’s way and the way of many of his class at that time to speak to his servants and to the country people

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121 Mugglestone, *Talking Proper*, p.222.

122 Ibid., p.259.

123 Tony Crowley, *Language in History : Theories and Texts* (London: Routledge, 1995), Chapter 5.

124 Ibid., p.148.

125 Cloudesley, *Idylls of Yorkshire*, preface.

126 Guy Balguy, *The Bantams of Sheffield* (London: Leadenhall Press, 1891), preface.

127 Ibid., p.18.

128 Joyce, *Visions of the People*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.201.

129 Robert Southey, *The Doctor* (London: Longman, Brown, 1848), p.292.

generally in broad Yorkshire'.<sup>130</sup> In Hamerton's *Wenderholme*, Isaac Ogden spoke dialect 'as thoroughly, when it suited him, as any cotton spinner ... but he could also speak, when he chose, a sort of English which differed from aristocratic English by greater hardness and body rather than by any want of correctness'.<sup>131</sup> Ogden forbids his son to speak dialect in his presence, which causes the boy to use it all the more enthusiastically in his father's absence. 'But the severity of the paternal law had at least given him an equal facility in English, and he kept the two languages safely in separate boxes in his cranium'.<sup>132</sup> As shown above, Hamerton's novel was heavily autobiographical, so he was possibly evoking his own youthful bi-dialectism.

Balguy's Dandelow Bantam was playfully and consciously bi-dialectal, providing his own humorous running translation. He says of a woman, 'She's no catch...she's wuth nowt' and immediately adds, '“Wuth nowt”, I said, which is plainer English nor sayin' "she's afflicted with an unfortunate impecuniosity"'.<sup>133</sup> But in Lady Catherine Milnes Gaskell's *Prose Idylls of the West Riding* (1907), the upwardly mobile son of the broad Yorkshire-speaking Mrs Brough speaks Standard English, unless 'he unconsciously relapsed into his mother's dialect, which he often did in unguarded moments'.<sup>134</sup> Halliwell Sutcliffe's moorland gentry tend to speak Standard English but can make a rapid transition when appropriate. In a tavern scene in *A Man of the Moors*, Griff Lomax 'spoke... with a good Yorkshire brogue that not one of the bystanders could have bettered'.<sup>135</sup> In *Ricroft of Withens*, Sutcliffe writes of the old Yorkshire squirearchy that 'ancient of birth, old in instinctive courtesy, they were wont to talk the soft Yorkshire tongue to their inferiors and with their equals in right good northern English'.<sup>136</sup> Sutcliffe here plausibly introduces the concept of a *via media* – northern accented English as a compromise between outright dialect speech and regionless RP.

The wealthy Hiram Yorke in Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (1849) is the most prominent bi-dialectal character in English literature. Described as 'a Yorkshire gentleman... par excellence',<sup>137</sup> when first encountered he is speaking in a West Riding dialect mingled with passages of Standard English. Acknowledging the likely confusion of the reader, Brontë writes

It will have been remarked that Mr Yorke varied a little in his phraseology; now he spoke broad Yorkshire, and anon he expressed himself in very pure English. His manner seemed liable to equal alterations; he could be polite and affable, and he could be blunt and rough. His station then you could not easily determine by his speech or demeanour...<sup>138</sup>

We are taken into Yorke's well-appointed house and his cultural accomplishments are emphasised by the fact that he begins to speak French in an accent nearly as pure as that of

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130 Mary Beaumont, *A Ringby Lass & Other Stories* (London: Dent, 1895), p.31.

131 Hamerton, *Wenderholme*, p.200.

132 Ibid.

133 Balguy, *Bantams of Sheffield*, p.19.

134 Lady Catherine Milnes Gaskell, *Prose Idylls of the West Riding* (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1907), p.5.

135 Sutcliffe, *A Man of the Moors*, p.61.

136 Sutcliffe, *Ricroft of Withens*, p.47.

137 Brontë, *Shirley*, p.46.

138 Ibid., p.42.

his guest, the half-Belgian Robert Moore. In the context of the whole novel, Yorke – whose surname is significant – is a provocative, often paradoxical figure, being an industrialist with radical sympathies, and his bi-dialectal language is a reflection of this. Brontë makes the point to her readers that a strong Yorkshire regional identity, including speech pattern, is perfectly consistent with wider cultural accomplishment. S.B. Smith argues that Yorke and other bi-dialectal characters in *Shirley* also serve as ‘subtle reminders that the social system is not unfixed and unchanging. When single dialect speakers show the assumed rigidity of the class system, bi-dialectal characters undermine those underlying assumptions and subvert the system through their control of language’.<sup>139</sup> It could equally be argued, however, that bi-dialectism was a strategy whereby middle and upper class people attempted to safeguard their hegemony, and thereby reinforce the rigidity of the class system.

During one passage in *Shirley*, Brontë challenges and provokes any cultural sense of superiority that might be felt by her southern readers when she mimics and mocks the affected accent of the curate Mr Donne.

‘Wretched place – this Yorkshire. I could never have formed an idear of the country had I not seen it; and the people – rich and poor – what a set! How corse and uncultivated! They would be scouted in the south... The rich are a parcel of misers – never living as persons with their incomes ought to live: you scarsley – (you must excuse Mr Donne’s pronunciation, reader; it was very choice; he considered it genteel, and prided himself on his southern accent; northern ears received with singular sensations his utterance of certain words); you scarsley ever see a fam’ly where a propa carriage or a reg’la butla is kep; and as to the poor – just look at them when they come crowding about the church-doors ... clattering in clogs; the men in their shirtsleeves and wool-combers’ aprons, the women in mob-caps and bed-gowns.’<sup>140</sup>

After Donne has concluded, he is rounded on by Shirley Keeldar. ‘How dare the pompous priest abuse his flock? How dare the lisping cockney revile Yorkshire?’ In this passage and others, *Shirley* – although its central theme is a regionally unspecific examination of gender roles<sup>141</sup> – reveals itself to be one of the most aggressively regional of Yorkshire novels. Indeed, Tim Dolin has written that ‘conflict between London and the Northern provinces generates the ideological collisions that animate *Shirley*.’<sup>142</sup> Terry Eagleton has complained that the novel places ‘tedious chauvinistic stress on verve and fighting Yorkshire blood’.<sup>143</sup> At one point Brontë does indeed seek to chill the spines of her southern readers.

A yell followed this demonstration – a rioters’ yell – a North-of-England – a Yorkshire – a West Riding – a West-Riding-clothing-district-of-Yorkshire yell. You never heard that sound perhaps, reader? So much the better for your ears – perhaps for your heart...<sup>144</sup>

Thus an incoherent but eloquent shout could be seen as a form, and a threatening form of Yorkshire dialect.

Regional fiction of the nineteenth century provides data about the progress of Received

139 S.B. Smith, ‘A Yorkshire Burr: Language in “Shirley”’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 27 (1987), pp.643-44.

140 Brontë, *Shirley*, p.288

151 See, for example, Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

142 T. Dolin, ‘Fictional Territory and a Woman’s Place: Regional and Sexual Differences in Shirley’, *English Literary History*, 62 (1995), 197-215.

143 Terry Eagleton, *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p.51.

144 Brontë, *Shirley*, p.343.



Pronunciation – regionally unspecific although derived from the South of England<sup>145</sup> – among the upper and middle classes. A vivid example can be found in Amelia E. Barr's *The Hallam Succession*, published in 1887 but set 50 years earlier. Two upper-class characters, one of them a lord, speak consistently in Yorkshire dialect. Their children, however, speak Standard English, which leads to some conversational incongruity. Barr makes no authorial comment on this, so she assumed her readers would be aware of a generational shift that had taken place earlier in the century. In fact, by the late-eighteenth century the upper classes had begun to ensure that their offspring shed regional accents in case their status was undermined. 'The feeling that local dialects were lower-class had arrived' and had done so before the reform of the public schools, according to F.M.L. Thompson.<sup>146</sup> He cites the 1778 example of the baronet Sir Christopher Sykes, of Sledmere House in the East Riding, who was anxious that his offspring be tutored by someone who 'can correct their Yorkshire tone'.<sup>147</sup> Soon, peer pressure in public schools would ensure the evolution of RP as the regionless accent of the elite.<sup>148</sup> However, regional fiction does show us how the wealthy, the educated and the aspirational retained the option of speaking a regional dialect or accent, if only for strategic purposes – in order to put 'inferiors' at their ease; or, in the case of Hiram Yorke, to assert a regional cultural identity that was an important part of a multi-faceted personality.

The evidence gathered so far depicts the upper and middle classes using dialect to speak 'down'. But, as a final variant, perhaps bi-dialectism could be employed by working class Yorkshire people to achieve a particular social end. By the 1870s, according to Baring-Gould, it was the norm for 'Northerners' to 'speak two languages – English and Yorkshire, according to the company in which they find themselves'.<sup>149</sup> In the 1898 novel *Ben o' Bill's the Luddite*, the dialect-speaking narrator – a sworn Luddite – lays a complaint before a locally billeted army officer:

'Captain Northman,' I said, civilly and speaking my finest...I may be a boor but I am one of the boors who pay your wages. Neither is it the part of a gentleman to meet a request for redress by an added insult. But I see I mistook my man...<sup>150</sup>

He has chosen to forsake his customary Yorkshire speech patterns and 'speak his finest' in order to assert social parity with the officer. This is an illustration of the fact that by the late-nineteenth century, dialect speech was an element of regional identity, but one which could be used optionally and strategically.

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145 Accounts of the origins of Standard English and Recieved Pronunciation, which gathered place after the publication of pronouncing dictionaries in the eighteenth century, and the rise of the public schools, can be found in, *inter alia*, Beal, *English in Modern Times*, Mugglestone, *Talking Proper* and Crowley, *Language in History*.

146 F.M.L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1963), p.86.

147 Ibid., p.86.

148 Beal, *English in Modern Times*, p.186.

149 Baring-Gould, *Yorkshire Oddities*, p.109.

150 D.F.E. Sykes and Geo Henry Walker, *Ben o' Bills the Luddite* (London: Simpkin Marshall, Hamilton Kent and Co; Huddersfield: the Advertiser Press, edition undated [BL gives 1898]), p.116.

## Conclusion

In its use of dialect, evocation of landscapes and exploration of social relations, the regional novel, a significant genre during the periodisation of this thesis, is a fruitful source for historians. In his advocacy of the regional novel for inter-disciplinary purposes, Snell has cautioned that fiction is not a conventional historical resource with a mimetic function.<sup>151</sup> This must be borne in mind, but this chapter has shown that it is possible to mine some of the regional fiction of the Victorian and Edwardian periods in order to explore Yorkshireness from a range of perspectives.

Some of these works might have had only a local audience, but many were distributed nationally and some achieved great popularity. The common descriptive sub-title 'A Yorkshire Story' might have encompassed an elemental drama in the North Riding or an industrial fable set in the West Riding. It might be, then, that 'Yorkshire regional novel' is too broad a category to have any true historico-cultural significance and that Leclaire, in his *General Analytical Bibliography*, was fully justified in his sub-division of Yorkshire into West Riding, North Riding, Holderness and Dales. However, some of the most characteristic and widely-read Yorkshire novelists of the Victorian-Edwardian period depicted the West Riding and its moorland society, despite the proximity of industry, in similar terms to the manner in which authors such as Blackmore and Linskill exploited the North Riding. The rejection of industrialisation by authors such as Sutcliffe – while it might have stemmed from a romantic impulse – is a highly significant element in Yorkshire regional fiction. The best-selling Yorkshire novel of the period under survey, Riley's *Windyridge*, depicted a West Riding community living in a kind of de-industrialised bubble and the fact that this book earned such enormous popularity among Yorkshire people is indicative of an extreme ambivalence towards industrialisation and urbanisation. True industrial novels set in the West Riding, such as Burnley's *Looking for the Dawn* and Balguy's *The Bantams of Sheffield*, are relatively few in number. A resentful attitude towards industry also found expression in a strand of nostalgia and regret for the proto-industrial past. The relative slowness with which the Yorkshire textile industry adopted full mechanisation within the factory system, compared to Lancashire, is significant here.

Attempted reproduction of dialect was an important element in regional fiction. In the case of novels set in Yorkshire, conventional class distinctions, delineated by manner of speech, seem to be present. But there are a number of complexities, such as bi-dialectism, whereby middle and upper-class characters might adopt regional speech patterns in certain circumstances. Assuming that this represents a syndrome from real life, it might simply reflect a hegemonic class strategy; but it might also suggest that regional identity was of equal significance to class allegiance during the nineteenth century.

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151 Snell, 'The regional novel', pp.17-18.

# Yorkshire county societies at home and overseas

‘A new development of modern clannishness’

A POTENT synonym for Yorkshire that was current in the nineteenth century was ‘Empire County’. It began as a light-hearted remark by Lord Morpeth, the future seventh Earl of Carlisle, who was elected MP for Yorkshire in 1831, and for the West Riding in 1832.<sup>1</sup> After defeat in 1841 he visited the United States. During a dinner he responded to a toast in his honour and said

I should almost feel myself justified in borrowing a form of phraseology which is familiar to the citizens of the State of New York and applying it to the county of Old York. If you will not, therefore, think I am taking too much of a Yorkshire advantage, I wish, gentleman, to christen our Yorkshire ‘The Empire County’ of Old England. And I can well imagine, gentlemen, by the experience of my own breast, how quickly yours may be awakened to associations of distant haunts and far off homes. Some of you may even amid busy scenes of the rapid progress and successful commerce which surround you in this fair and wealthy city, will not have forgotten the long-tried and in some sense, I may call it, the parent enterprise of such towns as Leeds and Sheffield and Hull; and even amid the broad flow of the stately Hudson you will call to mind the romantic beauties of our own Wharfe and Wensley Dale...<sup>2</sup>

Lord Morpeth’s equation of Yorkshire with the ‘Empire State’ of New York was a happy piece of inspiration that he would return to in several subsequent speeches, but the concept of Yorkshire as ‘Empire County’ entered wider discourse and can be encountered in various contexts:

Twenty-three years after the death of the statesman who made free trade a reality for his fellow-countrymen, a statue has been erected here in his honour, and from far and near in the West Riding of the empire county which stretches between the Tees and the Humber, and which extends well-nigh also between two seas, a vast multitude has assembled to do honour to the name of PEEL.<sup>3</sup>

Our noble county was once designated by a great man as ‘the Empire County of England’, and now, whilst we are ‘up and doing’, why should we not make Leeds its Empire City.<sup>4</sup>

He [Baptist minister the Rev J.S. Browne] suggested that Yorkshire, as the empire county of the nation, should take some special part of the world for its mission work.<sup>5</sup>

Commenting on an article in *Westminster* magazine, which described Yorkshire favourably, the *Bradford Observer* expressed a hope that henceforth ‘our Southern friends will henceforth... appreciate the Empire County as they ought’.<sup>6</sup> Evidence that the phrase

1 Ian Machin, ‘Howard, George William Frederick, seventh earl of Carlisle (1802–1864)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13902, accessed 30 January 2011]).

2 *York Herald and General Advertiser*, 24 December 1841; also the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 25 December 1841.

3 *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 7 June 1873.

4 *Leeds Mercury*, 6 March 1878.

5 *Leeds Mercury*, 8 October 1884. Examples from publications outside Yorkshire include *The Graphic*, 5 August 1871 – ‘York is the capital of the Empire County – the Altera Roma of modern England as much as it was of the ancient Empire’.

6 *Bradford Observer*, 14 April 1859.

entered everyday speech is provided by a comment on the death of Yorkshire novelist Mary Linskill, that ‘her field...was more varied than that of her fellow Empire County-ist Charlotte Brontë’.<sup>7</sup>

The notion that Yorkshire was the nation’s ‘Empire County’ would have had obvious appeal. It meant that Yorkshire could be seen as analogous with, or a prefiguration of the most prosperous and dynamic of the emergent United States. The term encompassed the county’s size – its ‘broad acres’ – and bestowed upon it a special status and role within Britain and the burgeoning overseas empire. When they relocated to other parts of Britain or migrated to its empire, to what extent did Yorkshire people retain and affirm their identity? This chapter explores this question by analysing the county societies that were a feature of Victorian and Edwardian Britain and the wider British world.

‘County blood is thicker than Imperial water’, wrote a journalist in 1891. ‘When York meets York in London, then comes the grip of friendship’.<sup>8</sup> He was commenting on the latest of numerous examples of county societies that were formed in the capital during the late-nineteenth century. One of them, the Society of Yorkshiremen in London, with an elite patronage, would remain in existence for almost a hundred years. In addition, Yorkshire societies – and similar organisations that commemorated numerous other English counties – were formed elsewhere in the United Kingdom and throughout the British Empire. Responsible for annual dinners, regular social functions and activities such as cricket clubs, choirs and picnics, and providing assistance and networking opportunities for recently arrived émigrés, county societies were the English equivalent of the Caledonian clubs and their St Andrew’s dinners overseas analysed by Elizabeth Buettner and others.<sup>9</sup> Nineteenth-century English county societies furnish an excellent example of the multilayering of British identities and, perhaps more significantly, the multilayering of English identities.<sup>10</sup> They are a useful affirmation that a Yorkshire identity was felt, cultivated and literally celebrated by middle and upper-class people away from the county. In addition, the fact that the county’s newspapers would carry reports of Yorkshire societies within Britain and overseas is evidence that an exogenous affirmation of Yorkshire identity was actively sought. Once again, therefore, Yorkshireness is being transmitted, if not on this occasion being constructed, by newspapers and periodicals, in Britain and overseas. As a coda to the chapter, a contrast will be made with the United States where it would appear that English regional sub-identities, including that of Yorkshire, while not immediately discarded, proved to be transitory.

County feast societies originated in London in the first half of the seventeenth century. There were at least ten during the Interregnum, when there was an increase in migration to the capital accompanied by a strong sense of county consciousness and rivalry.<sup>11</sup> An informal Yorkshire club met at Smithfield in the 1650s and it was satirised by Ned Ward in terms which show that the stereotype of the crafty, double-dealing Tyke was well

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7 *North-Eastern Daily Gazette*, 10 June 1891.

8 *Baily’s Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, 1 June 1891.

9 Buettner, ‘Haggis in the Raj’; Tyrrell, Hill and Kirkby, ‘Feasting on National Identity’.

10 Linda Colley, *Britons* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), esp. pp.13-17.

11 P. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p.278.



established.<sup>12</sup> The first formal Yorkshire feast in London took place in 1679. February 1680 saw the publication of ‘A Sermon preached at the Second General Meeting of the Gentlemen, and others in and near London, who were born within the County of York, in the Church of St Mary-le-Bow.’<sup>13</sup> This society continued to hold feasts, prefaced by a service and a sermon, for several years. Its particular claim to fame is that in 1690, in commemoration of the revolution of 1688, it commissioned an ode from the composer Henry Purcell and the librettist Tom D’Urfey. This ‘rather bizarre commission’, as a contemporary Purcell scholar describes it,<sup>14</sup> is usually referred to as *The Yorkshire Feast Song*.<sup>15</sup> County societies faded by the early-eighteenth century and an attempt to revive a Yorkshire society in London in about 1760 was short lived.<sup>16</sup> This might indicate a lowering of county consciousness but Clark finds this analysis problematical. There is plenty of evidence, he writes, ‘that county rivalries continued to be fanned by sporting fixtures, with old style cock fights joined now by cricket matches involving county teams’.<sup>17</sup>

In 1812 a Yorkshire Society was formed in London. It assembled for elaborate banquets and had a high status membership, including the Earl of Harewood. Its charitable aims were described at its second annual meeting, in March 1813, by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Claudius Stephen Hunter, who had no Yorkshire connection. He had had ‘the misfortune to witness the great distress which, from one cause or another, prevailed among the lower classes of society, and it was incredible the number of Yorkshire people who were continually applying for relief’. A fund would be established for their temporary relief and assistance, and this was in emulation of the work done by similar county societies in London, such as those of Cumberland, Westmoreland and Somerset.<sup>18</sup> Such activities were a revival of the role played by the gentry-led county societies in London of the seventeenth century.

By the 1820s the role of The Yorkshire Society had altered. It was now ‘instituted for the purpose of maintaining, clothing and educating the children of indigent Yorkshire parents’, according to a statement made at its thirteenth annual dinner, an event that was chaired by the Duke of York.<sup>19</sup> The more focused role of the Society, turning away from a form of ex-officio ‘outdoor relief’, owed something to the current of utilitarian thinking that would lead to the amendment of the Poor Law. In 1830 the Society acquired its own school on Westminster Bridge Road and was described as ‘The Yorkshire Society for Boarding, Clothing and Educating the Sons of Respectable Yorkshire parents or Parent

12 Ned Ward, *A Compleat and Humorous Account of all the Remarkable Clubs and Societies in the City of London and Westminster* (London, 1756), pp.73-6, quoted in Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, p.290.

13 Published by Walter Ketilby, 1680 – accessed via Early English Books Online [ <http://eebo.chadwyck.com>, accessed 18 March 2011].

14 Robert King, *Henry Purcell* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), p.177.

15 It was published in 1719 by D’Urfey as *An ODE on the Assembly of the Nobility and Gentry of the City and County of York, at the Anniversary Feast, March the 27th 1690. Set to Musick by Mr Henry Purcell. One of the finest Compositions he ever made, and cost 100l. the performing*. For an appraisal of the work see Peter Holman, *Henry Purcell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 171-172.

16 Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, p.292.

17 Ibid.

18 *Leeds Mercury*, 17 March 1813.

19 *Morning Chronicle*, 11 May 1824.

reduced by misfortunes resident within ten miles of the General Post Office, St Martins-le-Grand'.<sup>20</sup> Pupils at the school, which had accommodation for 100, were admitted after election, and grateful Yorkshire parents who had fallen on hard times in the metropolis sometimes found the resources to record their thanks in classified advertisements.<sup>21</sup> In 1896 the Society's chairman explained that 'they did not take in children of the pauper class, but those in a line of life in which the parents had been engaged in various businesses. They did not parade their poverty, but bore it with courage, and they were a class who ought to be looked after'.<sup>22</sup> In the early-twentieth century, the Yorkshire Society merged with The Society of Yorkshiremen in London and by 1924 it had given up the school (the building was taken over by Morley College) and provided bursaries so that beneficiaries were placed at schools in Yorkshire.<sup>23</sup>

The popularity of Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby* meant that the term 'Yorkshire school' acquired a pejorative connotation that the Yorkshire Society had to counter. In 1896, its chairman, Frank Lockwood MP, told the annual meeting that:

As to Yorkshire schools they had not at all times borne the most savoury reputation. When that genial novelist, Charles Dickens, wanted to dwell on the iniquities of school life, it was to Yorkshire that he went for his type. But there was no Mr Squeers in Westminster Bridge Road - (cheers) - but if some poor suffering lad belonging to the country [sic] should be brought there suffering as that hero of fiction did he would find there a happy home, comfort and consolation, and it was the duty of Yorkshiremen to see that the institution was continued in the generations to come...<sup>24</sup>

Other than countering a negative image of the county, the Yorkshire Society – although it revolved around territorial origin – did not play a significant role in promulgating a Yorkshire cultural identity. At the Society's 1824 dinner, a Dr Sauer performed a pair of humorous Yorkshire ditties,<sup>25</sup> but county societies with high status memberships, able to attract the patronage of royalty, lacked the cultural manoeuvrability that enabled them to introduce many of the demotic elements of Yorkshiredness, such as the folksy menus analysed in Chapter 3. A menu for the 1907 banquet of the Society of Yorkshiremen in London renders the dishes in French, with 'Jambon De York' the only example of alimentary regionalism.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that large numbers of English county societies were formed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century is of significance. If this was indeed the period when the economic, political and cultural initiative was swinging back to London, these organisations – sometimes dubbed 'clan societies' by the press – can be seen as a response. Their very existence demonstrates an acceptance that power and influence must reside in the imperial metropolis, and that large numbers of people from the provinces would need or seek to relocate there, but there was an attempt to

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20 Advertisement in the *Leeds Intelligencer*, 9 April 1851.

21 For example – 'Mr and Mrs BAXTER desire to return their most grateful THANKS to all subscribers and friends who have kindly assisted in procuring the election of their son, Thomas Owst Baxter to the [Yorkshire Society's School] – *The Times*, 18 June 1891.

22 *Leeds Mercury*, 21 May 1896.

23 Brochure entitled *The Society of Yorkshiremen in London and The Yorkshire Society*, 1932 (no publisher: address given as Victory House, Leicester Square, WC2). Schools at which beneficiaries of the fund were placed included Archbishop Holgate's School, York, Beverley Grammar School and Leeds Grammar School.

24 *Leeds Mercury*, 11 July 1896.

25 *Morning Chronicle*, 11 May 1824.

26 Armytage family papers 1907-1918, WYAS Calderdale, KMB 954.

retain and promote a sense of distinct county-based identity within a nationalising culture. It was a revival or survival of the concept of county identity as being essentially a construct for the gentry, but the new middle classes were admitted.

Among the earliest of this new wave of county associations was the London Lincolnshire Society, which held an inaugural dinner in 1886.<sup>27</sup> The first annual dinner of Devonshiremen in London took place in 1889. This ‘set an admirable example to the inhabitants of other shires,’ according to a Yorkshire newspaper.<sup>28</sup> In 1892 a Northumberland Club and an Association of Lancastrians in London were established,<sup>29</sup> and a London Cornish Association had been formed by 1898.<sup>30</sup> The Yorkshire Society, focused on its school, had been in existence since 1812, but in 1891 there was an attempt to begin a new association for county exiles in London.

Yorkshiremen in London are about to follow the prevailing fashion by holding an annual festivity. There are in the metropolis, it is stated, fully 12,000 natives of the largest county, and it has been decided to afford them an opportunity for social reunion at an inaugural dinner and concert... Sir A.K. Rollit, M.P., presiding. The music is to be provided exclusively by Yorkshire artistes.<sup>31</sup>

The phrase ‘prevailing fashion’ indicates that such county societies were regarded as something of a fad. *The Daily News* was almost sarcastic when it announced the new society, but its report lists the elite, mostly titled support garnered for the venture.

Yorkshiremen in London are now forming themselves into a society which is to launch itself by the usual festivity ‘an inaugural dinner’, followed by a concert. Among the patrons already secured by the new development of modern clannishness we observe the names of Viscount Cranbrook, who was born in Bradford... Sir Frederic Leighton, who is a native of Scarborough, the Bishop of Oxford, born at Knaresborough ... Earl Fitzwilliam and the earls of Wharcliffe and Londesborough, Lord Carmarthen M.P., son of the Duke of Leeds and lieutenant in the Yorkshire Hussars, The Hon J.C. Dundas, Sir Charles Legard, Mr Waddy, M.P., intimately connected in former days with Sheffield, several other members of parliament at present sitting for Yorkshire constituencies, the Lord mayor of York, the mayor of Leeds and other prominent Yorkshiremen. Sir Albert Rollit, M.P., who is a Hull man, has promised to preside at the opening dinner.<sup>32</sup>

This report, as many did, went on to mention the Yorkshire Feasts of the late-seventeenth century, attempting to draw historical continuity. The *Yorkshire Herald* report of the dinner included the detail that:

Among suggestions received to enhance the sociability of the meeting was one that men of each Riding should be placed together at table, but for the present this plan was not found convenient. The largest number from any one town of the three Ridings was from Hull; next, of course, came the West Riding men, and after them, the men of North Yorkshire.<sup>33</sup>

Toasts were proposed first to the Royal family, second to the Houses of Parliament and thirdly to ‘Yorkshire, our County’. Sir Albert Rollit’s speech in response is an example of the rural-urban duality of Yorkshire identity.

‘God made the country; man made the town’, and of both Yorkshiremen were proud. The

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27 *The Standard*, 4 March 1886.

28 *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 7 March 1889.

29 *The Graphic*, 16 January 1892.

30 *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 31 March 1898.

31 *North-Eastern Daily Gazette*, 7 April 1891.

32 *Daily News*, 9 April 1891. Sir Albert Rollit (1842–1922), especially prominent in London Yorkshire societies, was a Hull-born solicitor, businessman and politician, a Conservative MP who switched to the Liberals in 1906 – Philip A. Hunt, ‘Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/47087>, accessed 30 Aug 2010].

33 *Yorkshire Herald*, 23 April 1891.

everlasting hills of millstone grit were covered with mills, and Yorkshiremen were as proud of them as of their heather clad moors.<sup>34</sup>

For the *Leeds Mercury*, Sir Albert struck ‘a pardonable spirit of clannishness’.<sup>35</sup>

This Society of Yorkshiremen, whose secretary was Isaac Coop, a Yorkshire-born chartered accountant, continued until 1893 – an innovation at its third annual dinner was that ladies would be invited – but it then lapsed, having struggled for support. In 1899, a barrister named Henry J. Barker decided to revive the concept. He spoke to a number of fellow Yorkshiremen, including aristocrats and MPs, but ‘on the whole they were by no means favourable to the idea of forming a Society of Yorkshiremen in the Metropolis. They did not consider that Yorkshiremen were sufficiently clannish or clubbable’. An unnamed MP identified one of the problems with forming a cogent Yorkshire identity when he wrote to Barker:

My opinion is that you will find any endeavour to found such a Society will end in being a waste of your time. There is a difficulty getting Yorkshiremen together. Whether it is the vast area, the different Ridings, or the separate interests incidental to these divisions that militate against a strong Society of Yorkshiremen being formed, is a mystery to me.<sup>36</sup>

However, Barker persevered and succeeded in establishing The Society of Yorkshiremen in London, which quickly became successful.

Its first president was the Earl of Crewe, a Liberal peer who was descended from a Wakefield cloth merchant.<sup>37</sup> In his speech at the inaugural dinner, Crewe hoped that the society would ‘bring together all Yorkshiremen in London in a thoroughly agreeable and beneficial way’ and that ‘the fine old Yorkshire speech which could be heard from Middlesbrough to Doncaster, and from Hull to Todmorden, would not be forgotten’.<sup>38</sup> The latter comment was an example of the commonly expressed belief that regional speech patterns were endangered by developments such as rail travel and compulsory education. With its elite superstructure, The Society of Yorkshiremen in London would not be the most apt vehicle for the promulgation of vernacular Yorkshireness, but symbols such as white roses were in abundance at its first dinner and a sequence of toasts, which included one raised to ‘Our Imperial Forces’, concluded with the dialect whimsy of one of the most widely known Yorkshire toasts.

*Here's tiv us, all on us,  
May we nivver want nowt,  
Noan on us,  
Nor me.*<sup>39</sup>

By 1904 The Society of Yorkshiremen in London had 530 members. Its presidents had included the Earl of Crewe, Viscount Halifax and Sir Albert Rollit. Its patron was the

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 25 April 1891.

<sup>36</sup> From an interview with Barker in *Souvenir of the Society of Yorkshiremen in London* (London: Harper Woodhead, 1904), npn.

<sup>37</sup> John Davis, ‘Milnes, Robert Offley Ashburton Crewe, marquess of Crewe (1858–1945)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32628>, accessed 27 March 2011]

<sup>38</sup> *Yorkshire Herald*, 13 July 1900.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



Prince of Wales and its membership list was headed by the Duke of Norfolk, the Marquis of Zetland and six other peers. Herbert Asquith (born in Morley) and Gerald Balfour (MP for Central Leeds) were members, alongside five baronets and eight knights of the realm. This elite-heavy membership was evident for many years. In 1918, by which time the King was the Society's patron, the list of vice-presidents included three marquesses, two earls, two viscounts, nine lords, ten baronets and ten knights. The total membership was approximately 600.<sup>40</sup>

Qualification for membership was 'either birth in the county of Yorkshire, or descent from Yorkshire parents on either side, or marriage with a native of the county, or special association with Yorkshire by residence, public work or otherwise'.<sup>41</sup> In addition to the link that it forged with the Yorkshire School, in 1906 the Society of Yorkshiremen in London established a benevolent fund that rendered assistance to 'Yorkshiremen in distress'. This was redolent of the role of county societies in later-seventeenth century London.<sup>42</sup> Every applicant to the fund had to be recommended by two subscribers 'who have sufficient knowledge of him or her to certify that he or she is a deserving character'.<sup>43</sup> Sometimes money was given to enable people to return to Yorkshire.<sup>44</sup> During the Great War, the Society carried out a scheme to visit every wounded Yorkshire soldier known to be in a London hospital.<sup>45</sup> There was some involvement with the cultural life of Yorkshire. In 1909 the Society was the patron of a large-scale historic pageant in York and ran excursion trains north to the event.<sup>46</sup> In 1925 the Society sponsored a performance at the Kingsway Hall in London of Purcell's 1690 *Yorkshire Feast Song*, which includes the refrain 'Long live the City and County of York'.<sup>47</sup> More characteristic, perhaps, was a London dinner in 1900 in honour of Lord Hawke and the Yorkshire county cricket team at which every guest was presented with a white rose to wear.<sup>48</sup>

Residence in London was not a pre-requisite for membership of the society and some members, such as the novelist Halliwell Sutcliffe, furnished only Yorkshire addresses, suggesting that for some the society was a means of maintaining contact with an influential county elite in London by attending annual dinners. Applicants were required to state the locality in Yorkshire that they wished to be associated with and this was entered next to their names. This allows an appraisal of the intra-county distribution of the members of a society which had the motto *Tria Juncta In Uno*. [See Figure 1]. In 1917, approximately 64 per cent of members were associated with the West Riding; 24 per cent with the North Riding and 12 per cent with the East Riding.<sup>49</sup> The West Riding

40 1918 annual report for The Society of Yorkshiremen in London [SYIL], WYAS Calderdale, KMB 954.

41 Membership application form for SIYL, no date, WYAS Calderdale, KMB 954.

42 Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, p. 278.

43 *Benevolent Fund of the Society of Yorkshiremen in London*, booklet dated 1906, WYAS Calderdale, KMB 954.

44 Instances of this are described in *Society of Yorkshiremen in London and The Yorkshire Society*, 1932, p.25.

45 WYAS Calderdale, KMB 954.

46 Ibid.

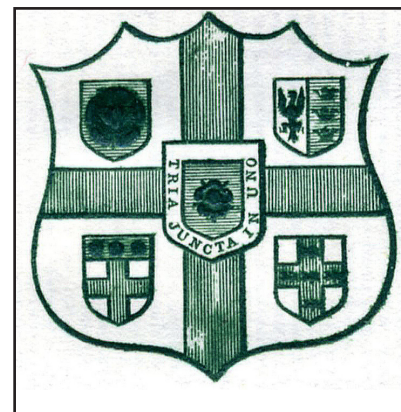
47 *The Times*, 22 October 1925.

48 Lord Hawke, *Recollections and Reminiscences*, p.215.

49 Estimates made using membership data for SIYL in its 1918 annual report.

(containing most of industrialised and heavily urbanised Yorkshire) had approximately 75 per cent of the county's population and the North Riding some ten per cent. The disproportionately heavy North Riding membership of the Society of Yorkshiremen in London suggests that the organisation was a vestige of county identity as belonging primarily to landed families, but of course most members by far originated in the industrial West Riding. It can be presumed that they mostly had commercial, business and professional backgrounds and probably played a more active role in the society than the roster of titled vice-presidents.<sup>50</sup> Some were journalists and writers – in addition to the novelist Halliwell Sutcliffe, the author/journalist J.S. Fletcher and William Riley, author of the best-selling Yorkshire regional novel *Windyridge*, were listed as members at various times. The Halifax writer Phyllis Bentley was a member, possibly in the 1930s.<sup>51</sup> This adds an extra twist to the troubled relationship that this novelist and critic enjoyed with London and metropolitan culture.<sup>52</sup> It also demonstrates that women were admitted to a society that aimed for a more heterogeneous membership than its title and its elite-heavy superstructure suggest. At the 1907 AGM the chairman urged that 'members should endeavour to enrol more of the 20,000 Yorkshiremen who, for better or worse, had made their home in London' and he rejected an increase in subscription, which stood at five shillings for an ordinary member, on the grounds that 'there were many Yorkshiremen in London whom they would like to see join the Society but to whom the difference between five shillings and ten shillings might be a considerable item'.<sup>53</sup>

The Society of Yorkshiremen in London remained in existence for most of the twentieth century, and had a membership of more than a thousand in the late 1950s.<sup>54</sup> It retained sufficient prestige to engage Yorkshire-born Prime Minister Harold Wilson as a speaker at a function in 1970,<sup>55</sup> although later in this decade the organisation was 'a shadow of itself' according to Michael Bradford.<sup>56</sup> The Society's benevolent fund was registered as a charity in 1964 and removed by the Charity Commission in 1993, on the grounds that it had ceased to exist.<sup>57</sup> This was the last vestige of a society which had roots in a seventeenth-century tradition of charity and sociability among county exiles in London but more particularly



**Figure 1:** Emblem of The Society of Yorkshiremen in London, with the motto *Trium Juncta In Uno* and incorporating the coats of arms of the three Ridings plus that of the City of York.  
West Yorkshire Archives Service,  
Calderdale

50 For an analysis of the hierarchies and membership structures of nineteenth and early-twentieth century societies in general, see R.J. Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations' in F.M.L. Thompson (ed), *The Cambridge Social History of England 1750-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.413.

51 Her undated membership badge is kept at WYAS Calderdale.

52 See Dave Russell, 'Province, metropolis, and the literary career of Phyllis Bentley in the 1930s', *The Historical Journal*, 51, 3 (2008), 719–740.

53 *Yorkshire Post*, 29 January 1907.

54 *Yorkshire Post*, 1 May 1959.

55 *Yorkshire Post*, 11 March 1970.

56 Bradford, *Fight For Yorkshire*, p.33.

57 <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk> [accessed 4 Feb 2011].

in a late Victorian impulse to celebrate, reinforce and utilise county/regional identity in a culturally dominant capital city.

Yorkshire societies were also established in many other parts of Great Britain, most of them centres of trade and industry. For example, in 1891 the Birmingham Yorkshire Club was founded, to be followed a year later by the Edinburgh Yorkshire Association. These were essentially social organisations, offering what today would be described as networking opportunities, but they also preserved some of the benevolent role that was historically associated with county societies. In 1900, the vice-chairman of the Edinburgh Yorkshire Association reported that although it had a fund for indigent Yorkshiremen, he was pleased to say that not so much as a penny had been applied for in the past year.<sup>58</sup>

A regular toast at the annual dinners of the Edinburgh association was given to 'The land we live in' – a form of words that was almost invariably part of the ritual in distant parts of the Empire during functions for exiles, including Yorkshire societies. It is a phrase that implies a dichotomy of identity and when used overseas it had a transitional quality, as if those present, while committed to their new territory, were not yet prepared to surrender their native British Isles identity or sub-identity. When 'The land we live in' was used as a toast by Victorian Englishmen domiciled in Scotland, it indicated limitations to nineteenth-century Britishness.

Although the cultural collision of Scottishness and Yorkshireness at functions of the Edinburgh Yorkshire Association resulted in some vigorous banter, many alleged similarities were detected between Scots and Yorkshire people. This is a theme that frequently surfaced in late nineteenth-century discourse – for example the novelist Halliwell Sutcliffe's allegation that the character and even the speech of Yorkshire moorland dwellers and 'their Scotch cousins' were identical.<sup>59</sup> In 1895, the president of the Edinburgh Yorkshire Association was Charles A. Cooper, who had become editor of the *Scotsman*. He remarked that there seemed to be

a feeling in the minds of some Englishmen that they who came from Yorkshire and had settled down in Scotland, were something like the unfortunate Jews at the time of the captivity. He should be much more inclined to liken them to the Jews who went up into the land of Canaan and found it a land overflowing with milk and honey.<sup>60</sup>

When the Mayor of Bradford was the guest in 1900 he said that he had the 'highest esteem for any body of Yorkshiremen who could come and live in Auld Reekie'. He continued with comments that inversely served to reinforce the customary identity of Yorkshire people as hard dealers.

Personally he had striven very hard to carry out his ideal of business in Edinburgh, but it was no use. (Laughter). He pitied them from his soul; he pitied them for the life that they had to lead there. He could not but admire their bravery (Renewed laughter). He believed Scotsmen and Yorkshiremen belonged to the lost ten tribes of Israel. If there was a difference between them he had not been able to find it. He believed both were quite capable of taking care of themselves.<sup>61</sup>

The equivalence of Yorkshire and Scots people, as being equally worldly wise, became

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58 *Glasgow Herald*, 12 October 1900.

59 Sutcliffe, *By Moor and Fell*, p.83. For a historical appraisal of the cultural and ethnic common ground between Lowland Scotland and Northern England, see Colley, *Britons*, pp.14–15.

60 *North-Eastern Daily Gazette*, 18 October 1895.

61 *Glasgow Herald*, 12 October 1900.

a frequent theme at such functions and provides evidence – albeit whimsical – that in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Yorkshire county origins could be almost as powerful a source of identity as Scots nationality. At the 1902 annual dinner of The Yorkshire Society of New Zealand a guest speaker stated that ‘in London, the Yorkshireman could compete with any one except the Scotchman’.<sup>62</sup> At the 1913 meeting of the Yorkshire Society of South Australia, the guest speaker, Professor Darnley Taylor, proposing the toast of ‘Yorkshire, our country [sic]’, claimed that

the difference between the Yorkshireman and the Scotchman was that while they both ‘did’ the southerner, the Yorkshireman did it so nicely that it left no sting. (Cheers). It was always pleasing to be ‘done’ by a Yorkshireman...<sup>63</sup>

In 1932 the Society of Yorkshiremen in London published a list of affiliated societies in the United Kingdom and overseas. It indicated that 12 Yorkshire societies were extant in the United Kingdom, although it was not exhaustive.<sup>64</sup> The same publication also listed seven affiliated overseas Yorkshire societies, in India, Canada, Hong Kong, Australia and Malaya.<sup>65</sup> Many more such societies were in existence in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In 1900, an inaugural gathering of the South Canterbury Yorkshire Society in New Zealand was informed that there were already ‘four or five’ such societies in that country, and ‘many in Australia’ as well as India and South Africa.<sup>66</sup> In 1907 the Yorkshire Society of New South Wales expressed the hope that a worldwide federation might be possible, ‘as in the case of the Scotch societies’.<sup>67</sup> There is evidence that links were formed across what can be termed the Yorkshire diaspora.<sup>68</sup> For example, at a 1903 meeting of the British Columbia Yorkshire Association ‘friendly greetings’ were read from the Yorkshire Society of New Zealand.<sup>69</sup>

The county societies are an indication of the sub-division of English identities at the height of the imperial period. The Caledonian societies which also flourished in the Empire

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62 *Evening Post*, Wellington, 28 August 1902.

63 *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, 5 September 1913.

64 The UK societies listed in the 1932 handbook of The Society of Yorkshiremen in London and The Yorkshire Society were: The Society of Yorkshirefolk in Birmingham; The Brighton, Hove and District Society of Yorkshiremen; The Society of Yorkshiremen in Bristol and District; The Carlisle and Cumberland Society of Yorkshiremen; The Yorkshire Society of Exeter and District; The Society of Yorkshiremen in High Wycombe and District; The Society of Yorkshiremen in Lincoln; The Yorkshire Society of Liverpool and District; The Nottingham Yorkshire Society; The Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen; The Society of Yorkshirefolk in Sutton and District; The Yorkshire Society of Torquay and District. Miscellaneous archival references show that other Yorkshire societies had or have existed, in centres such as Liverpool, Bolton, Shropshire and Blackpool.

65 The Society of Yorkshiremen in Bombay; The Yorkshire Society of Calcutta; The Yorkshire Society of Calgary; The Society of Yorkshiremen in Hong Kong; The Society of Yorkshiremen in Malaya; The Yorkshire Society of Queensland; The Yorkshire Society of Vancouver.

66 *Timaru Herald*, 31 October 1900.

67 *The Yorkshire Society of New South Wales*, brochure dated 1907/8, WYAS Bradford, DB60/C2/58.

68 The word ‘diaspora’, literally a ‘scattering’, is widely used to describe the global migrations of such groups as European Jews, Italians, Germans, the Scots and, indeed, sub-national groups such as Yorkshire émigrés. But Stephen Constantine argues that it is inappropriate to use the term for the migration and settlement of British people overseas after 1880, when they ‘enjoyed an apparent ease of entry into and perhaps assimilation into British, or at least British-derived, societies and cultures, whether inside the British Empire or outside in the United States’. He argues that the term ‘overseas settlement’ is more appropriate for this phase of migration – Stephen Constantine, ‘British emigration to the empire-commonwealth since 1880: From overseas settlement to Diaspora?’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 31: 2 (2003), 16-35.

69 *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 30 January 1903.



used symbols, cuisine and ritual to represent Scotland as ‘an undifferentiated country – the Highlands writ large’, in the words of Buettner.<sup>70</sup> A lack of such shared symbols meant that an undifferentiated England would have been more difficult to represent. It can be argued that by the 1890s the project to construct an Englishness derived from rural Southern imagery and symbols was well under way.<sup>71</sup> But I have argued that during the nineteenth century, Yorkshire could be taken to epitomise England almost as plausibly as the Cotswolds. In the absence, therefore, of a fully-negotiated universal Englishness, county of origin was chosen by large numbers of English expatriates as a sub-British identity. This is a theme which has yet to surface fully in explorations of identities in ‘Greater Britain’, masked as it is by the general acceptance that the late-nineteenth century was ‘the classical era of British race patriotism’, and that it was this which did most to shape the identity of settlers, in the words of Neville Meaney.<sup>72</sup>

But an English county or regional identity was not in conflict with wider Englishness or Britishness. The St Andrew’s Day dinners in India analysed by Buettner expressed loyalty to wider British state structures and enterprises, with the monarchy invariably heading the toast list. The English county societies too were fully reconciled to, indeed enthused by the imperial project. Buettner adds that ‘Scottish patriotism was held up not as a threat to imperial solidarity and sentiment but as a means of bolstering them’, and this is one of many findings in her article that can be transposed with minimal alteration to the English county societies. For example, the manner in which the rooms used for St Andrew’s Day dinners were decked out with symbols of Scottishness such as flags, thistles and heather is paralleled by the placards of Yorkshire sayings and the white roses that would provide the decor for county dinners in countries and colonies such as New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Singapore. At the inaugural dinner of the Yorkshire Society of New South Wales in 1907 ‘the rooms were picturesque with flags and palms, while the white rose and the waratah emblematic of Yorkshire and Australia were intermingled on the board’.<sup>73</sup> At the 1913 dinner of the Yorkshire Society of New Zealand, the walls of Godber’s Hotel in Wellington were displayed with texts such as ‘Mak’ yersens at Hooam’, ‘Tuk in, lads’ and ‘Yo’re allus welcum’. The Yorkshireman’s Coat of Arms was reported to ‘occupy a proud position on the wall’ on what was ‘a typical Yorkshire night, and everywhere was heard the pleasing Yorkshire accent which the exiles from their beloved county lose only after very long association with the country of their adoption’.<sup>74</sup>

Many of the overseas Yorkshire societies were founded in the 1890s, at about the

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70 Buettner, ‘Haggis in the Raj’, p. 227.

71 See Howkins, ‘The Discovery of Rural England’; Paul Rich, ‘The Quest for Englishness’, in Gordon Marsden (ed.), *Victorian Values* (Harlow: Longman, 1990); Russell, *Looking North*, p.26.

72 Neville Meaney, ‘Britishness and Australia: Some reflections’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 31: 2, (2003), 121-135. James Jupp, in *The English in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), describes the cultural variety of the English at home, by region, class and degree of urbanisation, but not fully how or if that variety was sustained on arrival in Australia.

73 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 September 1907.

74 *Evening Post*, 23 September 1913. The allusion to Yorkshire accents contrasts with a much later complaint in a report of a dinner of the Yorkshire Society of Malaya: ‘I had hoped... to hear some real, broad, Yorkshire speech – the unashamed short vowels which make North Country voices so refreshing in contrast with the drawling, affected rather supercilious accent heard all too often in the south of England. Alas, I heard nothing but perfect B.B.C. English at the Yorkshire dinner...’ *Straits Times*, 10 December 1934.

same period that the county societies were forming in London. This suggests a movement spreading outwards from the imperial centre.<sup>75</sup> But the overseas societies developed their own forms and rituals and the Yorkshire Association of Victoria (Australia) was established by 1890, in advance of the Society of Yorkshiremen in London. *The Leeds Mercury* carried a report of the annual dinner in Melbourne:

The annual Yorkshire dinner was held last night in the Town Hall. Mr J.S. Horsfall, the President of the Yorkshire Association of Victoria, occupying the chair and about 160 Yorkshiremen being present. The dinner... contained, amongst the various courses, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, roast sucking pig, bacon and broad beans, and other favourite Yorkshire dishes. When the dinner was over the usual loyal toasts were proposed by the chairman and duly honoured. Dr Neild then proposed 'Our County' and in doing so said that Yorkshiremen were proud of their county. It was the largest of all the counties, was well populated with a sturdy, industrious race, contained some of the greatest manufacturing towns in existence, and for the beauty of its rural and agricultural scenery could not be surpassed in the world. Mr T. Rennison responded to the toast and reminded his fellow-countrymen that this continent was discovered and claimed for Great Britain by Captain Cook, a Yorkshireman. Mr R. Speight, who proposed 'The land we live in', stated that all persons here owed a debt of gratitude to the pioneers who had made the country what it is... Mr R.G. Benson proposed 'The Yorkshire Association of Victoria and its President' and the Chairman in responding urged all Yorkshiremen to join the association, the objects of which were to assist Yorkshiremen who were in distress, and to promote good social feeling amongst Yorkshiremen generally.<sup>76</sup>

The passage shows that the pattern for these events and these organisations was established at an early date. First there is the alimentary regionalism of the menu, including an attempt to appropriate fairly standard cuisine as 'favourite Yorkshire dishes'. As shown in Chapter 3, the menus would often be interspersed with dialect expressions to enhance the Yorkshireness. The hierarchy of toasts would begin with expressions of imperial loyalty, proceeding towards that of 'Our County'. Then followed an aggrandisement of Yorkshire by the guest speakers. This would usually include references to the size of the county, its industriousness and scenic attractions. Comments on the supposed qualities of Yorkshire people would be made. Indeed, the overseas societies provide excellent source material for how Yorkshire people imagined themselves at this period, as if a combination of distance and sentimentality gave them added licence to be boastful and self-satisfied. At the inaugural 'smoke social' of the South Australia Society of Yorkshiremen in 1894, the president, Canon Sunter, delivered an encomium in which he asserted that 'there was something to be proud of in being a Yorkshireman'.

If he were asked what countryman he should like to be his reply would always be 'An Englishman' but of all the counties he preferred Yorkshire. He liked their characteristics. They reminded him of the rugged but beautiful scenery of the country [sic]. With all its ruggedness there was a soft beauty about the surroundings that seemed to be born in the women of Yorkshire. The vale and valleys of Yorkshire were unsurpassable for beauty throughout England and Yorkshiremen were noted for pluck, energy and general application, which would make any nation great. These same characteristics were to be found in Yorkshiremen abroad.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Mrinalini Sinha has questioned the extent to which British clubs in India were 'simply transplanted to the colonies', adding that 'the relationship between imperialism and culture... cannot be conceived as a one-way street'. She is writing about permanently established social clubs 'which served to incorporate Europeans abroad into an emerging new colonial political and social order'. Her findings have some but limited relevance to organisations such as the county societies whose activities revolved around annual dinners and occasional gatherings – Mrinalini Sinha, 'Britishness, Clubbability, and the Colonial Public Sphere: The Genealogy of an Imperial Institution in Colonial India', *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (October, 2001), 489-521.

<sup>76</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 21 January 1890.

<sup>77</sup> *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, 30 March 1894.

A toast was often raised to ‘Our Native County, t’biggest, t’bonniest and t’best’, a phrase that became formulaic.<sup>78</sup> Famous Yorkshire people were then invoked – as evidence of county genius – and at Yorkshire functions in Australia and New Zealand, Captain Cook invariably took pride of place. At the inaugural function of the South Canterbury Yorkshire Society in New Zealand in 1900, ‘a few of the great Yorkshire worthies were mentioned, as types of the vigour and prowess of the race bred in the county’. They included Cook and also William Wilberforce.<sup>79</sup> One of the constitutional objects of the Yorkshire Society of New South Wales, formed in 1907, was to take part in celebrations of the anniversary of Cook’s landing in Australia, and the society duly added a commemorative tablet to a Cook statue that had been erected in Hyde Park, Sydney, in 1879. When the tablet was unveiled, the audience was informed by the president of the NSW Yorkshire Society that Cook was ‘one of the greatest Yorkshiremen’ and that he had ‘in a marked degree the characteristics of that race’ – these included attention to detail and leadership skills.<sup>80</sup>

Qualifications for membership of the overseas societies were essentially the same as those for equivalent societies in London – birth in the county of Yorkshire, descent from Yorkshire parents on either side or special association with the county by residence.<sup>81</sup> Some evidence would have to be proffered. ‘The secretary was empowered to enrol all applicants who are able to prove their Yorkshire extraction,’ according to a 1908 report of the British Columbia Yorkshire Association.<sup>82</sup> The overseas societies also emulated the historic role of the London county societies by offering advice and financial assistance to Yorkshire people in difficulties. The Yorkshire Society of New South Wales included in its rules a commitment ‘to advise Yorkshire immigrants coming to the state’.<sup>83</sup> When the Society of Yorkshiremen in South Australia was formed in February 1894, the chairman, Mr Theodore Bruce, stated that

their object was to form an association which would extend a helping hand to any Yorkshireman arriving in the colony and which would relieve any distress that might exist amongst them. If it were merely for the purpose of jollification he would have nothing whatever to do with it, but he thought their objects would commend themselves to all in the colony who hailed from Yorkshire.<sup>84</sup>

Soon this function was placed on a more formal footing when the South Australia society formed what it called a ‘labor bureau’.

Matters in the colony were in a bad state at present and every Yorkshireman should endeavor to find employment for any fellow countryman who was out of work. The names of unemployed Yorkshiremen would be received at Mr S.Plint’s shop and every effort would be made to secure work for them.<sup>85</sup>

When the South Canterbury Yorkshire Society was formed in 1900, it was reported that

The objects of these societies were to bond people from the Old Country, and their offspring, to have readings in the dialect of the old land, and to amuse themselves in various innocent ways;

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<sup>78</sup> For example, in the *Evening Post*, 23 September 1913.

<sup>79</sup> *Timaru Herald*, 31 October 1900.

<sup>80</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May 1908.

<sup>81</sup> *Yorkshire Society of New South Wales* brochure.

<sup>82</sup> *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 30 January 1908.

<sup>83</sup> *Yorkshire Society of New South Wales* brochure.

<sup>84</sup> *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, 10 February 1894.

<sup>85</sup> *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, 30 March 1894. It seems unlikely that this society achieved its aims to a great extent, for it soon folded, to be revived in 1911.

but their greatest purpose was to lend a helping hand to anyone coming to the district a stranger... Wherever such a society exists, Yorkshiremen coming to the place would seek out the president or secretary and they could give him useful advice and if necessary the funds of the society might be able to afford him a few shillings to put in his pocket.<sup>86</sup>

This suggests that at the height of the imperial period, English county societies played a significant role in aiding new settlers who had taken their county identity overseas with them. It also implies a degree of social inclusiveness and one supposed aspect of nineteenth-century Yorkshire identity which found frequent expression at émigré society dinners was that it was an essentially democratic county in which class distinction was less important than wealth and position earned through merit and hard work. In Yorkshire there was ‘scarcely any leisure class’ and it was ‘a working man’s home’, according to a speaker at the 1896 dinner of the Yorkshire Society of New Zealand.<sup>87</sup>

Buettner’s analysis of St Andrew’s Day dinners in India shows that these functions, like the county societies, raised funds to help indigent compatriots, but they were also socially exclusive. Scots in lower status occupations were excluded from the most prestigious dinners and attended their own celebrations instead. ‘Those welcome at the dinners suggest these events to be more illustrative of higher status Scots’ desire to make connections with other empowered members of colonial society,’ she writes.<sup>88</sup> There is no evidence that the Yorkshire societies within Britain or overseas practised overt class discrimination. Indeed, as has been shown, they claimed to aspire towards inclusiveness. Accounts of the regular activities of the societies lend some support to this. There were social gatherings described as ‘at homes’ or ‘smokes’. These sometimes featured dialect readings, lectures or lantern shows that kept the expatriates in touch with Yorkshire life. There are references to the formation of cricket clubs and choral unions under the aegis of Yorkshire societies and visiting celebrities would be entertained – in 1905 the Yorkshire Society of Toronto planned a banquet for Lord Hawke, captain of the Yorkshire County Cricket Club, when he visited the city en route from India.<sup>89</sup> The following year, The Black Dyke Band, from Queensbury near Bradford, was entertained during its tour of Canada.

In two fundamental respects, the overseas Yorkshire societies did discriminate. By their very nature, they operated a racial filter. The basic qualification of Yorkshire birth or descent meant that it was completely unnecessary to devise a policy towards people of different ethnicity.<sup>90</sup> This was at a period when racial policies, backed by legislation in some colonies, sought to restrict entry to white – preferably British – Europeans.<sup>91</sup> English county societies could make an implicit contribution to this. At the 1912 dinner of The Yorkshire Society of New Zealand, the dominion’s Governor stated that the county societies were

important elements in the Imperial establishment, and should be fostered in every way possible. In his dreams he thought of such societies penetrating into the far distant back blocks, where the

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86 *Timaru Herald*, 31 October 1900.

87 *Evening Post*, 16 January 1896.

88 Buettner, ‘Haggis in the Raj’, 230.

89 *The Toronto Star*, 22 March 1905.

90 In ‘Britishness, Clubbability, and the Colonial Public Sphere’, Sinha examines the dilemmas faced by social clubs in India over the admission of natives or Anglo-Indians.

91 Constantine, ‘British emigration to the empire-commonwealth’, 20.



fertile lands might be cultivated by societies – county societies – all drawn from the same old stock in the same old county and the good old country.<sup>92</sup>

When the Premier spoke at the same function he described New Zealand as ‘a country fit for the very best of the human race to live in – a country colonised by the very pick of the Anglo Saxon Stock’. Such comments illustrate a federation of white, British identities, with Yorkshireness as a component of a racially-determined whole. A speaker at the 1899 dinner of The Yorkshire Society of New Zealand delivered a fairly standard encomium to Yorkshire, whose people ‘had taken a gritty part in building up that Empire which was now recognised as the greatest in the world. But they were not to forget that they were Englishmen and New Zealanders too’.<sup>93</sup> In Toronto, the Yorkshire Society – formed in 1904 – held its meetings in the Sons of England Hall, the premises of the St George’s Society. When the latter society held a parade in 1906, among the 1,500 marchers, alongside the Daughters of England and the Sons of England, were members of the Yorkshire Society.<sup>94</sup> The event thus symbolised multiplicity and compatibility of identities.<sup>95</sup>

Gender is another area of discrimination. Often named societies of Yorkshire-men, their rules might not overtly have barred females but there was an assumption that these organisations were essentially male. There are references to wives and families participating in some of the social functions, especially in Canada. ‘The annual gatherings [of the Manitoba Yorkshire Society] are now amongst the institutions of the city and are great successes. The “At Home” of the sons *and daughters* [my italics] of the county of broad acres last night was no exception.’<sup>96</sup> More characteristic perhaps was the news that ‘About 125 people sat down to a [British Columbia Yorkshire Association] tea, which was served by a committee of ladies’.<sup>97</sup> In this respect, the Yorkshire and other county associations conformed to convention, in that they belonged to a public sphere that was seen as essentially male, with women performing roles associated with domesticity.

It can be shown that, like the Caledonian clubs, the Yorkshire societies attempted, with some success, to form links with the colonial elite. It would always be regarded as a matter of priority for a county society to secure prominent patronage. When it was proposed to form a South Canterbury Yorkshire Society in New Zealand, one of the prime movers, W. Halstead, ‘suggested that several *influential* [my italics] Yorkshire people should be asked to join’.<sup>98</sup> The calibre of the patrons and vice-presidents of the county societies and the high status of the guests at annual dinners suggests that these organisations did provide

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92 *Evening Post*, Wellington, 17 September 1912.

93 *Evening Post*, 19 January 1899.

94 *Toronto Star*, 28 May 1906. For more on these organisations, see Philip Buckner, ‘The Long Goodbye: English Canadians and the British World’, in Philip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (eds), *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary: Calgary University Press, 2005), p.187. For British and English émigré societies in Canada and other colonies and dominions see also Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.32-35; also Elizabeth Jane Errington, ‘British Migration and British America, 1783-1867’ in Philip Buckner (ed.), *Canada and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.156.

95 For the compatibility of regional with national British identities and their transplantation overseas, see Harper and Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, p.106.

96 *Daily Nor’Wester*, 1 March 1898.

97 *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 30 January 1903.

98 *Timaru Herald*, 13 August 1900.

opportunities for ordinary members to connect with leading members of the colonial and imperial establishment. Reports of annual dinners of the overseas Yorkshire societies usually include the presence of civic and colonial dignitaries and the closer that a society was located to the centre of power in a colony or a dominion, the more impressive its guests and patrons. When The Yorkshire Society of New South Wales was formed in 1907, its patron was the Governor, Sir Harry Rawson, a former Admiral, who was Lancashire-born, although his family had been Lords of the Manor in Bradford. His vice-patrons, Admiral Sir Wilmot Hawksworth Fawkes, the state senators J.P. Gray and E. Pulsford, and Dr Camidge, the Bishop of Bathurst, were 'all born in or closely associated with the County'.<sup>99</sup> As shown above, The Yorkshire Society of New Zealand, based in Wellington, frequently welcomed the Governor and the country's Premier to its annual functions.

Within the Empire and the Commonwealth, English county identity persisted across several generations. The societies survived beyond the periodisation of this thesis, well into the twentieth century. Indeed, a Yorkshire Society of Australia was formed as late as 1961.<sup>100</sup> Although the proportion of English emigrants who joined and sustained county societies would never have been very great, the existence of these organisations mounts a challenge to the orthodox view that the English were 'invisible immigrants'. This term has been used and debated most frequently in connection with migration to the United States where, according to Berthoff, English county memories and culture rarely survived into the second generation.<sup>101</sup> Berthoff is seen as a historian who bolstered the 'invisible immigrants' theory,<sup>102</sup> but he has a great deal of material about first generations of British migrants (including Yorkshire textile workers who turned the Massachusetts town of Lawrence into the 'Bradford of America') who formed societies in order 'to uphold the popular culture of the homeland'. That land was not the United Kingdom, he adds. 'The immigrants redivided the Union Jack once more into the red cross of St George and the white saltire of St Andrew – or replaced it altogether with the dragon banner of the ancient princes of Wales.'<sup>103</sup> There is little evidence, however, that the English flag was further subdivided into regional or county identities, as it was in destinations such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Charlotte Erickson writes that

The English left very few newspapers or organizational records through which to study their experiences in America. Except very sporadically, they did not organize politically, attach themselves to a single religious denomination, or cluster in a few communities. When they organized, or helped to organize trade unions, co-operatives, friendly societies, churches or communities, their institutions quickly became 'Americanized'.<sup>104</sup>

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99 *Yorkshire Society of New South Wales* brochure.

100 National Library of Australia, Record ID NBD10853687. Formed in Elizabeth, South Australia this society aimed 'to promote fellowship among migrants from Yorkshire and others with connections with that county' [ <http://www.nla.gov.au/librariesaustralia/> accessed 10 February 2011].

101 Rowland Tappin Berthoff, *British Immigrants in Industrial America, 1790-1950* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953), p.210. He has an anecdote of the young son of a Chicago Yorkshireman who bragged to his father after a school lesson on the Revolution that 'You had the king's army, and we were only a lot of farmers, but we thrashed you'.

102 Challenges to this theory, and to the inevitability of assimilation in general, have come in particular from Richard Alba and Victor Nee in, for example, *Remaking the American Mainstream* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003).

103 Berthoff, *British Immigrants in Industrial America*, p.165.

104 Charlotte Erickson, *Leaving England. Essays on British Emigration in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p.11.

When Erickson collated letters home from mid-nineteenth century English migrants to the USA, the majority were from textile and metal workers of the West Riding, which had shown the highest rate of emigration in the 1841 census. She found references to the recreational life of the migrants – such as Sheffield cutlers playing cricket or Yorkshire quarrymen in New York holding a traditional rush bearing celebration – but there was ‘a paucity of references to formal ethnic institutional life even among migrants settled in large towns. In all letters there is but one single reference to a branch of the Sons of St George and only one immigrant mentioned reading a newspaper for the English-American reader’.<sup>105</sup> The implication of such findings is that English identity, certainly English regional sub-identity was transitory in the United States.

Mary H. Blewett, based on her detailed study of Yorkshire immigrants to Rhode Island, has mounted a challenge to the ‘invisible immigrants’ orthodoxy that has special relevance to this thesis.<sup>106</sup> The imposition of tariffs during the McKinley administration resulted in some Yorkshire worsted manufacturers establishing new operations in the USA, rather than abandon the American market. For example, the firm Benn’s, of Great Horton, Bradford, constructed a mill at Greystone, Rhode Island, and built an idealised version of a Yorkshire mill village that was occupied by skilled operatives imported from Yorkshire. For a time, the resultant Yorkshire enclave was fiercely protective of its cultural identity and was highly critical of anyone who married an ‘outsider’.

Migrants to Greystone quickly organised village activities specific to Yorkshire culture. The Social Club sponsored annual contests held by the Greystone Fanciers’ Association... as well as special holidays including the American Thanksgiving and the Yorkshire-style Whitsuntide... Dialect songs and recitations and other entertainments accompanied the Social Club’s monthly ‘feeds’ of roast beef. A Christmas tree and gifts for the village children were followed on Christmas Day by a celebration at the clubhouse with traditional richly spiced Christmas cake... and plum puddings with brandy sauce.<sup>107</sup>

This transplantation of Yorkshiredness to Rhode Island had some lasting effects. Blewett states that even in the late-twentieth century traces of Yorkshire dialect could be found in the local accent.<sup>108</sup> Cricket pitches and chip shops can still be encountered in the areas of Yorkshire migration in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, and it has been claimed that the American ‘Trick or Treat’ ritual is the result of a cultural merger between Halloween and the Yorkshire ‘Mischief Night’ tradition.<sup>109</sup>

Blewett’s ‘Yankee Yorkshireman’ is Hedley Smith, who emigrated to Rhode Island from Bradford in the 1920s. He clung fiercely to his Yorkshire cultural identity and wrote a series of unpublished novels set in a reimagined version of the mill village constructed by the Benn company. Blewett writes that Smith characterised Yorkshire immigrants as people with ‘ingrained habits of understatement, dour and taciturn ways of accepting and

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<sup>105</sup> Charlotte Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants. The Adaptation of English and Scottish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century America* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1972), pp.260-261.

<sup>106</sup> Mary H. Blewett, *The Yankee Yorkshireman: Migration Lived and Imagined* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Mary H. Blewett, ‘Yorkshire Lasses and Their Lads: Sexuality, Sexual Customs and Gender Antagonisms in Anglo-American Working Class Culture’, *Journal of Social History* Vol. 4, (Winter 2006), 317-336.

<sup>107</sup> Blewett, *Yankee Yorkshireman*, p.64.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p.91.

<sup>109</sup> Chris and Karen Allen, ‘Tricks, treats and cobbled streets’, *BBC History Magazine*, Vol 11, No 11 (November 2010), 30-32.

grappling with their personal adversities in private... shrinking from the torture of ever betraying emotional tenderness'.<sup>110</sup> But although Smith is an interesting case study, his cultural tenacity seems to have been atypical. In reality, Blewett implicitly acknowledges, the Yorkshire village constructed by the Benn company soon lost its distinctiveness and Smith's determination to retain his Yorkshire identity made him something of a misfit. The episode, if taken to represent Yorkshire and English emigration to the USA as a whole, suggests that there was a Yorkshire identity – associated with certain customs, recreations, social observances and alimentary preferences – and it could be transplanted, but it quite quickly became absorbed into the American mainstream, leaving just a few cultural vestiges. The English might not have been invisible immigrants, but their visibility soon began to fade. When the Morley author William Smith visited North America for his 1892 book *A Yorkshireman's Trip to the United States and Canada* – an immensely detailed piece of reportage – he duly sought out and encountered many recent Yorkshire émigrés, especially when he visited the wool textile manufacturing centres of Lawrence and Germantown, and he found traces of Yorkshire speech and sentiment.

I made enquiries at several of these places for the persons of whom I was in quest, and in each case I was met with the query, 'Eh ! ye're through (from) Leeds or Huthersfield (Huddersfield) way ?' I had to admit the correctness of the guess, and I was soon surrounded by a number of 'Yorkshire Tykes', who greeted me cordially and plied me with no end of questions about the Old Country.<sup>111</sup>

Bradford author and journalist James Burnley had visited Lawrence more than a decade earlier and found the influence of his hometown very evident.

Bradford faces meet you in the streets, Bradford saloon keepers supply you with your glass of lager, Bradford people stand behind the counters of the shops, Bradford names stare out from numerous sign boards in the principal street, and once you get inside a factory, it is Bradford, Bradford everywhere.<sup>112</sup>

However, neither Burnley nor Smith recorded any formal Yorkshire associations, customs or cultural survival in the United States, although Smith in particular would almost certainly have been eager to do so.

## Conclusion

The Yorkshire societies, in Britain and overseas, provide evidence for a county-based identity that could be retained and transplanted. The fact that a great number of English counties were commemorated by such societies demonstrates how, with no fully-negotiated discourse of Englishness available, migrants would sub-divide their identities. We can also see that the English, even when they were assimilated into or constituted the dominant culture of a colony or dominion, were not entirely the 'invisible immigrants' of conventional historiography, although they needed the scaffolding of 'Greater Britain' and this was not available in the United States.

Within the United Kingdom, and London in particular, county societies such as those formed by Yorkshire people were an emulation of those that flourished among gentry in

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<sup>110</sup> Blewett, *Yankee Yorkshireman*, p.87.

<sup>111</sup> William Smith, *A Yorkshireman's Trip to the United States and Canada* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1892), p.169.

<sup>112</sup> James Burnley, *Two Sides of the Atlantic* (London: Simpkin Marshall; Bradford: T.Brear, 1880), pp. 62-63.



the later-seventeenth century. But in the context of Victorian and Edwardian England they must be seen as a response to the process whereby, after a period of apparent provincial ascendancy or parity, London was reasserting its political, cultural and financial hegemony. Members of county societies – with their elite superstructure and middle-class rank-and-file membership – did not mount a serious resistance to this, indeed they might have subscribed to it with equanimity or enthusiasm, for the opportunities which it provided. But they were not ready to surrender their regional or county identity and welcomed the opportunity to commemorate it. Yorkshireness was thus an important compartment in their lives and identities and from accounts of the societies' activities we learn much about the symbolism and the language that were taken to constitute Yorkshireness.

# An eisteddfod for Yorkshire?

Professor Moorman and the uses of dialect<sup>1</sup>

WHEN Professor Frederic Moorman spoke to an audience of literary enthusiasts in Barnsley during the closing stages of the First World War, he outlined his ideas for organised celebrations of Yorkshire regional culture:

...we might borrow from Wales, with its musical and literary festival the Eisteddfod. You could have an Eisteddfod in Yorkshire each year. For instance, a little Dialect Festival for which special poems are written, set specially to music, sung by your local choirs and then you might have other things. At this festival could be performed one or two dialect plays. I am practically sure what can be done in Welsh villages can be done in a Yorkshire town of 5,000 people.<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 1:** Frederic W. Moorman, from the frontispiece of his posthumously published *Tales of the Ridings* (1920)

At the start of his speech, Moorman had stated that although he was ‘three quarters a Devonshire man and the rest Cornish’ he considered himself to be a ‘naturalised Yorkshireman’ who had ‘gone about so many parts of the County to know something of the Yorkshire dialect’. In fact Moorman had been resident in Yorkshire for 20 years, had been an active member of the Yorkshire Dialect Society for most of that time, had pioneered the use of the Dictaphone to record dialect speech, had compiled a substantial anthology of Yorkshire dialect poetry and had written extensively in dialect himself. Since 1913 he had been Professor of English Language at the University of Leeds, having joined the staff of what had been the Yorkshire College in 1898.<sup>3</sup> A frequent lecturer for the Workers’ Educational Association, he was in his mid-forties when he spoke to the Barnsley gathering and as an energetic and influential man who had committed his future to Yorkshire,<sup>4</sup> he might have been in a position to realise or encourage his conception of an eisteddfod equivalent in the county. However, on his forty-seventh birthday, in September 1919, Moorman suffered heart failure and drowned in a pool of the River Skirfare in the Yorkshire Dales, while swimming with his children. The episode was widely reported and there were many eulogies to

1 An article based on this chapter appears in *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 83, 2011, 199-217.

2 F.W. Moorman, manuscript of a speech to the annual dinner of Barnsley Booklovers’ Club (Special Collections, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds, undated [internal evidence suggests 1918]).

3 Moorman’s academic career is outlined in A.N. Shimmin, *The University of Leeds, the First Half Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, for the University of Leeds, 1954), pp.123-124. Moorman, as one of the first generations of academics to teach English as a university discipline, has been cited by historians debating the significance of this development – see especially Ian Small and Josephine Guy, ‘Re-Writing “Re-Reading English”’, *English*, Vol 39 (1990), 49-59. See also a concise appraisal of Moorman and his work in Russell, *Looking North*, pp.121-123.

4 His diaries record that he turned down academic posts elsewhere in the country because he was reluctant to leave Yorkshire, although in 1913 he had been willing to stand for the chair of Professor of English Literature at London University, narrowly losing in a ballot.

Moorman. One of his sons, John, became Bishop of Ripon.<sup>5</sup> He later wrote that his father's diverse activities during the war, including a special constablenesship, committee work, large-scale gardening in addition to his literary and university work had led to heart strain.<sup>6</sup> Among the tributes paid was one by Moorman's friend the dialect writer John Metcalfe, of Baildon, who was in no doubt that the professor would have pursued the goals outlined in the Barnsley speech.

His great idea, which he was never weary of preaching, was that through dialect and particularly dialect drama, something of the old cheer and good fellowship might be brought about in our small towns and villages. If he had been spared, I know he intended to devote himself to this object... though not a native of Yorkshire, he has laid all Yorkshiremen under a deep debt of gratitude.<sup>7</sup>

In describing himself as a 'naturalised Yorkshireman', and in the manner that he carefully quantified his county origins, Moorman might have intended to be whimsical to some extent, but the implication remains that he saw a regional identity as something significant and tangible that, if not bestowed by birth, could be acquired through an absorption in the dialect and customs of a county or region. He did, however, as will be shown below, believe that his status as a middle-class academic precluded him from fully adopting that identity.

It has been shown that a diverse body of literary material can be assembled retrospectively for the purposes of exploring a sense of Yorkshire identity during the Victorian and Edwardian periods. It is more difficult to identify a conscious project which attempted to cultivate that identity. This is probably inevitable in the case of any English region, where a lack of any separatist or federalist political agenda – apart from an occasional irritation at the cultural and political predominance of London – would mean that its sense of identity, while widely felt, especially at county level, would be an elusive thing, when compared to that of Wales, Scotland and Ireland.<sup>8</sup> Moorman's notion of festivals devoted to demotic Yorkshire culture is a rare example of such a project being conceptualised. He was, in effect, proposing the invention of a Yorkshire tradition. It would not, like the revived eisteddfodau of Wales, be one that could seriously claim to be a revival or remodelling of an existing tradition (although, as will be argued below, Moorman's close study of the late medieval Yorkshire mystery play cycles might have provided some inspiration), but it would have met some of Hobsbawm's criteria for an invented tradition. For example, Yorkshire dialect and drama festivals would have symbolised social cohesion and the membership of real or artificial communities.<sup>9</sup> Hobsbawm also states that historians should expect to witness the invention of traditions

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5 Michael Manktelow, *John Moorman* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1999).

6 Note added to the *Diaries* of F.W. Moorman (Special Collections, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds).

7 *Yorkshire Post*, 12 September 1919.

8 For a useful analysis of the almost complete lack of a tradition of regional political identity in England (with the exception of Cornwall) see Mark Sandford, 'English regionalism through the looking glass: perspectives on the English question from the North-East and Cornwall', *National Identities* 8(1), 2006, 77-93.

9 Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.9. The book includes a chapter by Prys Morgan, 'The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period' which includes an account of the eisteddfod movement. See also, Christopher Loether, 'Creating Traditions Through the Suspension of Memory: The Welsh Eisteddfod', *Rendezvous*, Vol 33, part 2 (1999), 33-45.

during periods when rapid social transformation weakened social patterns for which the ‘old’ traditions had been designed.<sup>10</sup> F.W. Moorman, like many dialect scholars, was convinced that dialect speech – and with it, regional or local distinctiveness – was being eroded as a result of modern educational, economic and social forces. He was in many respects – not least in his Dictaphone-equipped dialect collecting forays throughout Yorkshire – analogous to near-contemporary folk song collectors such as Cecil Sharp, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Percy Grainger, who believed that their mission was urgent and that the material they acquired could be the basis for a revived Englishness, especially in music but also more generally.<sup>11</sup> Moorman sought to create the material and the structure for a revived, preserved or newly-promulgated Yorkshireness.

His death meant that Moorman’s conception would never fully be realised, although some of the music and drama competitions in Yorkshire have included classes for dialect recital. But his own published output included uniform volumes of dialect prose, poems and plays that were intended for communal use. This chapter will provide an analysis of Moorman’s Yorkshire regional material and its philosophical basis. It will also provide some analysis of a hegemonic or at least prescriptive strand in Moorman’s attitudes, such as his belief that working-class Yorkshire poets, while they should not necessarily write in the dialect, should at least reflect the harsher reality of their lives and environment, including the experience of industrial work.

F.W. Moorman, the son of a Congregational minister from a Devonshire family, was born in 1872. His higher education took place in London, Wales and Germany, where his first published work was a translation of the rules of Association Football into German, so that ‘he may fairly be regarded as the godfather of that game on German soil’.<sup>12</sup> Throughout his subsequent academic career, initially in Aberystwyth – where it is possible that eisteddfodau came to his attention – and from 1898 and for the remainder of his life in Leeds, his research and outputs displayed his interests in high literary culture.<sup>13</sup> But in 1904 he joined the Yorkshire Dialect Society, which had been founded seven years earlier, and eventually he became a member of its council and its editorial secretary. He published several articles in the YDS’s *Transactions*.<sup>14</sup> His initial interest in Yorkshire dialect was philological and historical. In 1910 he published *The Place Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire* for the antiquarian Thoresby Society. But he then began to develop a social and cultural agenda that would be at the heart of a sequence of books published in the last years

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10 Hobsbawm and Ranger *Invention of Tradition*, p.4.

11 For example Sharp’s argument that the introduction of folk songs in elementary schools would serve to ‘refine and strengthen the national character’ – Cecil Sharp, *English Folk Song. Some Conclusions* (London: Mercury, 1965 [originally published 1907]), p.173. For the links between socialism and folk music, see Paul Ward, *Red Flag and Union Jack* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), p.29. A severe critique of the motives and methods of Cecil Sharp *et al* is in Dave Harker, *Fakesong* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985).

12 C. Vaughan, ‘Memoir of Frederic Moorman’ In F.W. Moorman, *Tales of the Ridings* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1920), p.8. This memoir, supplemented by material from Moorman’s diaries and from newspaper interviews and obituaries, is the source of some of the biographical material here. Charles Edwin Vaughan was the first Professor of English Language at the University of Leeds and thus a close colleague of Moorman.

13 His publications included scholarly editions of works by Shakespeare, Robert Herrick and John Fletcher and a monograph on Byron. His PhD thesis, published in 1905, was entitled *The Interpretation of Nature in English Poetry from Beowulf to Shakespeare*.

14 They included ‘The Wakefield Miracle Plays’ (Vol I, part VII); ‘Richard Rolle: The Yorkshire Mystic’ (Vol III, part XV); ‘Some Yorkshire Shibboleths’ (Vol III, part XVIII).



of his life and posthumously.

Moorman's canon of Yorkshire stories, plays and poems was entirely written or published during the Great War. As a result, national patriotism complemented the Yorkshire regionalism in some of the stories, poems and dedications. But such elements do help to illustrate again the layering of British identities. It has been shown frequently in this thesis that a strong sense of Yorkshire identity was fully consistent with an allegiance to the centre. For example, Moorman's anthology *Yorkshire Dialect Poems* (1916) had a frontispiece that read: 'To the Yorkshiremen serving their country in trench or in battleship I respectfully dedicate this collection of songs from the homeland'. The 'homeland' could be taken to mean county or nation or both. An interesting poem in *Songs of the Ridings* (1918) was entitled 'The New Englishman', which showed how the war had imbued a working-class Yorkshireman, who had hitherto identified himself purely by his locale, county and class politics, with a bittersweet sense of Englishness:

*I've lived all my life i' Keighley,  
I'm a Yorkshire artisan;  
An' when I were just turned seventy  
I became an Englishman.*

*I were proud o' my lodge an' my union,  
An' proud o' my town an' my shire;  
But all to 'consarns i' t' nation,  
I left to t' parson an' t' squire*

*Class-war were t' faith that I lived for,  
I called all capitalists sharks;  
An' 't' working man has no country,'  
Were my Gospel accordin' to Marx.*

*Owd England cared nowt about me,  
I could clem wi' my barns an' my wife;  
Shoo were ower thrang wi' buildin' up t' empire  
To build up a broken life.<sup>15</sup>*

As the war proceeds, the narrator – despite the loss of eight grandchildren in the trenches – gradually develops his national patriotism, so that he concludes:

*T'war is a curse an' a blessin;  
If fowks could understan';  
It's broken my home an' my childer,  
But it's made me an Englishman.<sup>16</sup>*

Moorman the WEA lecturer – *Songs of the Ridings* was dedicated to 'Yorkshire members of the Workers' Educational Association' – had probably seen this transformation of identity take place in many of his students. Perhaps the 'banal nationalism' – to borrow the concept developed by Michael Billig<sup>17</sup> – that was occasionally evident in the later Victorian Yorkshire dialect almanacs for example, had relatively little purchase until the arrival of a genuine national emergency.<sup>18</sup> During the war, populist Yorkshire literature readily allied

15 Verses one, three, four and six of 'The New Englishman' in F.W. Moorman, *Songs of the Ridings* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1918), p.38. Paul Ward states that while a few Marxists agreed that workers had no country, most of the British left followed Ramsay MacDonald in believing that 'the nation is not an abstraction but a community' – *Red Flag and Union Jack*, p.9.

16 'The New Englishman', verse 14.

17 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

18 For the various complexities of working class and left-wing political attitudes to the Great War, see

itself to the national cause. An unusual example was a single broadsheet publication from Bradford entitled *The Yorkshireman* (which had no connection with the earlier weekly periodical of the name). Published by the Fanciers Newspaper and General Printing and Publishing Company, later known as Watmoughs, it originally dealt exclusively with poultry, rabbit and cat shows. But during the Great War it was turned over to musings on the conflict and violent dialect fulminations against the enemy:

...if there's wun man aboon all others responsible for this hell upon earth it's Kaiser Bill, that inhuman monster with a brain so twisted aht ov its balance till he actually believes in his mind at he's God's awn instrument for t'shappin' t' world afresh. I honestly believe, missen, at Kaiser Bill's a madman, an whoivver hed courage to tak a gun an put a bullet through Kaiser Bill's brain he'd be dewin a kindness to Bill hissen, an a sarvice to mankind. Eniff to warrant his name being ritten i' t' long book o' Saints.<sup>19</sup>

In the early stages of the war, Walter Hampson, an engine driver from Normanton who was also a dialect author and member of the YDS, published *Private Job Muggleston, or Fun i' th' Army*, for which Moorman – an indefatigable writer of prefaces to his work and that of others – furnished an introduction that included some straightforward appraisals of the Yorkshire character. Hampson had the 'Yorkshireman's innate gift of broad rollicking humour in fullest measure' and also the 'Yorkshireman's love for his native soil, and his loyalty to the country whose battles he is fighting, in a way that touches the heart and fills us with the pride of patriotism'.<sup>20</sup> Hampson himself described his title character as 'a varry fair sample o' Yorksher raw material... Befooar this war brack aght he wor a farmer, but nah, as yo see, he's a sowger, not because he likes sowgerin' but becoss he loves owd England'.<sup>21</sup> In such material, the Yorkshire identity is not subsumed by Englishness or Britishness, but supplements them and is deemed to bring some special qualities to the mix. Muggleston's brawn and native wit make him an excellent and resilient soldier. A poem by Hampson entitled 'Owd England', using broad Yorkshire to express highly conventional patriotic sentiments, was included by Moorman in his 1916 anthology.

*Tha'art welcome, thrice welcome, Owd England;  
It maks mi heart sparkle wi' glee,  
An' does mi heart gooid to behold thee,  
For I know tha's a welcome for me.  
Let others recant all thi failins,  
Let traitors upbraid as they will,  
I know at thy virtues are many,  
An' my hart's beeatin true to thee still.*<sup>22</sup>

*Yorkshire Dialect Poems*, published on behalf of the YDS, ranged from 1673 to 1915 and combined folkloristic and anonymous material with poems by known authors, who included a roster of the leading late nineteenth/early-twentieth century Yorkshire dialect poets, including John Hartley, Thomas Blackah, J.H.Eccles, Ben Preston, James Burnley, Edmund Hatton and Florence Tweddell, who was the only female poet and the only

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Ward, *Red Flag and Union Jack*, pp.119-141; Arthur Marwick, 'Working Class Attitudes to the First World War', *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, 13, (Spring, 1966), 9-11.

19 *The Yorkshireman* (Idle, Bradford), 10 December 1915.

20 F.W. Moorman, Preface to Walter Hampson, *Private Job Muggleston, or Fun i' th' Army* (London: William Nicholson and Sons, n/d).

21 Ibid.

22 Verse one, 'Owd England' by Walter Hampson in Moorman (ed.), *Yorkshire Dialect Poems*, p.92. The poem had originally appeared in Hampson's *Tykes Abroad* (Wakefield: Nicholson, 1911).

representative of the Cleveland area. Moorman stated that his anthology was the first made up entirely of poems written in ‘broad Yorkshire’. It was compiled not for the philologist ‘but for those who have learned to speak “broad Yorkshire” at their mother’s knee and have not wholly unlearned it at their schoolmaster’s desk’.<sup>23</sup> Here again was the familiar refrain that education was resulting in a standardised speech and culture.

While Moorman frequently expressed his fears of the spread of Standard English (especially in his *Diaries* after an unsuccessful dialect-collecting field trip), he also grappled with what might seem to be the opposite problem that the diversity of dialect in the county meant that he could not reproduce the poems in ‘what might be called Standard Yorkshire’. He explained that

the spelling of ‘broad Yorkshire’ will always be one of the problems which the dialect-writer has to face. At best he can only hope for a broadly accurate representation of his mode of speech, but he can take comfort in the thought that most of those who read his verses know by habit how the words should be pronounced far better than he can teach them by adopting strange phonetic devices.<sup>24</sup>

Moorman’s pragmatism was despite or perhaps the result of his scholarly investigation of the varieties of Yorkshire dialect. He claimed to be a pioneer in the use of a Dictaphone for this purpose.<sup>25</sup> In a manner reminiscent of the folk song collectors of the early twentieth century he made long excursions by bicycle, proudly logging the distances he had ridden – 12,500 miles by the end of 1914. Some of his journeys were productive. On 24 May 1913 he

visited Martha Snowden, the mother of Philip Snowden MP- a delightful old woman of 80, who spoke broad dialect and had been a handloom weaver for a large part of her life...she recited a dialect poem into the Dictaphone. Her cousin Ben Snowden recited into it Ben Preston’s ‘The Handloom Weaver’.<sup>26</sup>

At other times he was frustrated. On 30 July of the same year he

cycled to Askwith and Weston in the hope of finding dialect speakers but failed in the attempt: scarcely anything of the true Wharfedale dialect seems to linger here, or else it is overlaid with more or less standard English pronunciation.<sup>27</sup>

Moorman developed an ear for the subtlest of nuances. His *Diaries* record that in September 1913 he studied the dialect spoken by fishermen in the North Riding coastal communities of Staithes and Runswick, which are 2.7 miles apart. ‘Difference between them quite appreciable’, recorded Moorman.<sup>28</sup>

When interviewed by *The Yorkshire Post* in May 1913 he had stated that it was ‘of course impossible for the purpose of dialect study to adopt a county or even a riding as a unit’. Despite this, Moorman continued to regard the whole of Yorkshire as a *cultural*

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23 Moorman (ed), *Yorkshire Dialect Poems*, p.vii

24 Ibid, p.viii

25 An interview with Moorman in *The Yorkshire Post*, 2 May 1913, asks: ‘How can we preserve for future generations some knowledge of the unadulterated speech which is still the medium of conversation between a large section of English folk? Modern science comes happily to the rescue...’ A Dictaphone had jointly been purchased by the Yorkshire Dialect Society and Leeds University and Moorman seems to have been able to carry it on his bicycle ‘at the imminent risk of being mistaken for the representative of some sewing machine company’. The use of a phonograph as opposed to hand notation for folk song collecting is widely regarded as an innovation of Percy Grainger. The question is explored and many common assumptions challenged by C.J.Bearman in ‘Percy Grainger, The Phonograph and the Folk Song Society’, *Music and Letters*, Vol 84, No 3 (August 2003), 434-455.

26 Moorman, *Diaries*.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

unit, possibly more than any other contemporaneous regional writer. His own collections of stories, poems and plays include material and themes from both agricultural and industrialised Yorkshire, from the Dales, the coastal north and the urban West Riding. It is as if Moorman the ‘naturalised Yorkshireman’ was better equipped than most native writers to develop a vision of the county as a whole. He is a literary anticipation of Yorkshire, with its three traditional ridings virtually intact, as one of the 14 ‘cultural provinces’ delimited by Phythian-Adams.<sup>29</sup>

Moorman’s own writings included the two posthumously-published books *Tales of the Ridings* and *More Tales of the Ridings*. Both volumes include stories with industrial and rural settings. Industrialised Yorkshire is usually but not invariably portrayed in dystopian terms. The character at the centre of ‘The Inner Voice’ worked 12 hours a day in a Leeds foundry but the Bessemer process of producing steel was an ‘operation of enthralling interest and beauty, and Job Hesketh’s soul was in his work’.<sup>30</sup> Equally, the Dales could be the setting for bleak tragedy, especially when modernisation arrived. In ‘A Laocoon of the Rocks’ an old Pennine shepherd watches with ultimately fatal despair as dry stone walls – compared to deadly snakes – gradually encroach on his territory. This theme enabled Moorman to set out his Ruskinian socialist beliefs when he wrote that the enclosure of open fields was ‘the outward symbol of that enwalling of the nation’s economic freedom which transformed the artisan from an independent craftsman to a wage earner, and made of him a link in the chain of our modern factory system’.<sup>31</sup>

The two books of *Tales* were better suited for private reading rather than recitation. The volumes that Moorman hoped would play some part in a working-class cultural renaissance in Yorkshire were his *Songs of the Ridings* (1918) and *Plays of the Ridings* (1919). The ‘eisteddfod’ scheme that he outlined in his 1918 speech had called for dialect poems and plays and he had the material to hand. In the preface to the *Plays*, Moorman outlined his intentions.

My former purpose [in *Songs of the Ridings*] was to furnish poems which might be read in the cottage and recited or sung as social gatherings of the people. My appeal now is to the peasant or artisan actor, and my hope is that I may do something to quicken an interest in dramatic art in Yorkshire and help in the establishment of folk-festivals of song and dance and drama throughout the towns and villages of the three Ridings.<sup>32</sup>

In spite of his populist leanings, Moorman’s professorial gown was never far from his shoulders and, allowing for the fact that the term ‘peasant’ had not entirely acquired the pejorative tone that it would in subsequent decades, members of his target rural and urban working class audience who did pick up the *Plays* and *Songs* would probably have felt somewhat patronised or bemused by the introductory material. The preface to the *Plays*, outlining Moorman’s philosophy and providing a generous helping of literary history, is somewhat longer than any of the three subsequent one-act dramas – ‘An All Souls’ Night Dream’, ‘Potter Thompson’ (based on a legend from Richmond in the North Riding) and

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29 See Phythian-Adams, *Societies, Cultures, and Kinship*.

30 F.W. Moorman, ‘The Inner Voice’, in *Tales of the Ridings*, p.53.

31 Moorman, *Tales of the Ridings*, p.22. The best known critique by Ruskin of the division of labour and the factory system is in his 1853 chapter ‘The Nature of Gothic’, from *The Stones of Venice*. It was reprinted in 1892 by William Morris’s Kelmscott Press.

32 F.W. Moorman, *Plays of the Ridings* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1919), p.7.



‘The Ewe Lamb’ (inspired by the *Second Shepherd’s Play* from the Wakefield Mystery Play Cycle). Moorman concluded his preface to these plays with the admission that

they are written in the Yorkshire dialect by one who is not a Yorkshireman, and by one who is so far separated from the folk-community that the main activities of his life are not bound up with the forge or field or mill, but with the university lecture hall and the study, But my hope is that they may prove a step towards the achievement of the real thing – a folk drama by the people for the people.<sup>33</sup>

Soon after his arrival in Yorkshire, Moorman had researched and written about what he styled the medieval Miracle Plays, three cycles of which were known to have existed in Yorkshire.<sup>34</sup> This enabled him to argue that although the county had made little or no contribution to the flowering of English literature and drama in the Elizabethan age, it had, from the thirteenth century, laid the foundations for these later developments. The *Second Shepherd’s Play* of the Wakefield cycle, he claimed, ‘contains many of the essential, and some of the more accidental, features of the Elizabethan drama’.<sup>35</sup> He went on to plead for it to be given modern performances in contemporary Yorkshire dialect.<sup>36</sup> This might have been the seed for Moorman’s later ‘eistedfodd’ concept – just as the revived Welsh festivals were notionally derived from ancient originals, Yorkshire festivals of folk drama might have been able to claim ancestry in the mystery play performances.

Moorman’s volume of Yorkshire plays was slightly preceded by a similar collection entitled *Bunderley Boggard and Other Plays* by John Metcalfe, of Baildon, a wool merchant, Justice of the Peace and fellow member of the Yorkshire Dialect Society. Moorman furnished a preface for this book, providing an analysis that the ‘dramatic instinct of Yorkshiremen seems to have been crushed by the Reformation’.

There has been no Yorkshire school of playwrights or actors. Our theatrical audiences have been content to accept whatever plays the touring companies have brought with them ... But now at last there are faint signs that this submissiveness to extraneous taste, which accords but ill with the Yorkshireman’s spirit of independence in other matters is coming to an end. We are beginning to ask for a drama which stands in sympathetic relation to the life which we are living in the county of broad acres, a drama which reflects and throws light upon the problems which confront us. We are slowly growing conscious that the raw material of which drama is made is to be found in profusion in the farmsteads and manor houses, the cottages, the mills, the shops and the forges of Yorkshire... Or if our heart is set on the so-called problem-play, where shall we find problems more urgent in their appeal for solution, or more potentially dramatic, than those which faced us in the everyday life of Yorkshire men and women?<sup>37</sup>

This is an argument that Yorkshire as a region should aspire to cultural self-sufficiency. The inclusion of ‘manor houses’ implies some middle-to-upper class participation in the

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33 Moorman, *Plays of the Ridings*, p.23.

34 York, Wakefield and Beverley, with texts for the first two surviving. Chester is the only other well-documented centre.

35 F.W.Moorman, ‘The Wakefield Miracle Plays’, *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society*, Vol I, Part VII (1906), 5-24. Moorman also contributed ‘A Yorkshire Folk-Play and its Analogues’ to *Essays and Studies* Vol 2 (London: English Association, 1910).

36 Modernised versions of some of the Wakefield or Towneley Plays began to appear shortly after Moorman’s death, for example *A Little Drama of the Crucifixion: being a modernisation of the ‘Crucifixion’ in the Towneley Mystery Plays*, by Ernest J.B.Kirtlan (London: Epworth Press, 1920); and *The Dawn of English Drama, with a modernised version of ‘Resurrecio Domini’ from the Towneley Plays*, by Patrick Joseph Kirwan (London: Harding and More, 1920). The Rev J.S.Purvis issued a modernised version of The York Cycle of Mystery Plays for performance during the Festival of Britain in 1951. It was published (London: SPCK) in 1957.

37 F.W.Moorman, Preface to John Metcalfe, *Bunderley Boggard and Other Plays* (London: Heath Cranton 1919).

project, although, as has been apparent already, Moorman saw a regional cultural identity as belonging almost exclusively to ‘peasants’ and ‘artisans’ and he frequently discounts the possibility that such people might engage with high literary culture. ‘Take Tennyson’s Arthurian heroes’, he said in his Barnsley speech.

What can Arthurian heroes mean to a Barnsley miner? He wants a literature which will interpret his own life and life around him – not aristocratic but democratic – and dealing with the ideas which concern him in his daily work.<sup>38</sup>

Moorman’s most satisfactory Yorkshire literary production was his volume of *Songs of the Ridings*, a collection of 25 dialect poems, which originally appeared anonymously in the *Yorkshire Weekly Post*. Again, the material ranges over the whole of the county in dialect forms, subject matter and physical description. Pathos, politics and humour are among the keynotes. In ‘Mary Mecca’, Moorman makes reference to his own West Country roots when he has a Yorkshireman pining for a female ‘foreigner’.

*Mary Mecca, Mary Mecca,  
I’m, fain to se thee here,  
A Devon lass to fill my glass  
O’ home-brewed Yorkshire beer.  
I awlus said that foreigners  
Sud niver mell on me;  
But sike a viewly face as thine  
I’d travel far to see.*<sup>39</sup>

The collection opens with the powerful ‘A Dalesman’s Litany’, a microcosmic Yorkshire epic in which a farm worker, on his marriage, is forced to seek work throughout the county.

*I’ve wrowt i’ Leeds an’ Huthersfel’,  
An’ addled honest brass;  
I’ Bradforth, Keighley, Rotherham,  
I’ve kept my barns an’ lass.  
I’ve travelled all three Ridin’s round,  
And once I went to sea;  
Frae forges, mills an’ coalin boats,  
Gooid Lord deliver me!*<sup>40</sup>

Each verse has a refrain derived from the ‘Beggar’s Litany’, rendered by Moorman as ‘Frae Hull an’ Halifax an’ Hell, Gooid Lord, deliver me.’<sup>41</sup> The Dalesman endures dreadful living and working conditions. Industrialisation is allowed no redeeming features.

*I’ve seen grey fog creep ower Leeds Brig  
As thick as bastile soup;  
I’ve lived where fowks were stowed away  
Like rabbits in a coop.  
I’ve watched snow float down Bradforth Beck  
As black as ebiny:  
Frae Hunslet, Holbeck, Wibsey Slack, gooid Lord, deliver me!*<sup>42</sup>

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38 Moorman, m/s of speech to Barnsley Booklovers. Moorman’s play ‘Potter Thompson’ was based around a legend that King Arthur and his knights were sleeping beneath Richmond Castle.

39 Verse one, ‘Mary Mecca’ in Moorman, *Songs of the Ridings*, p.59. ‘Mecca’ is a dialect diminutive of ‘Metcalf’.

40 Verse three ‘A Dalesman’s Litany’ in *Songs of the Ridings*, p.23.

41 This had first appeared in print in Anthony Copley’s *Wits, Fittes and Fancies* (London, 1595) as *Fro Hull, Hell & Halifax, good Lord deliver us.* Halifax’s part in the litany derived from its anachronistic Gibbet Law, whereby – as late as the 1650s – felons could summarily be beheaded if caught red-handed stealing goods worth more than thirteen pence. Hull was invoked in the Litany either because beggars were harshly treated in the city or because of the dangers posed by the River Hull.

42 Verse five, ‘A Dalesman’s Litany’.

Moorman's preface to *Songs of the Ridings*, occupying about a fifth of the book, is again an idiosyncratic essay in literary history, in which the author argues – perhaps self-interestedly – for the importance of the minor poet. He welcomes the fact that his *Yorkshire Dialect Poems* anthology had 'found an entrance into the homes of Yorkshire peasants and artisans where the works of our great national poets are unknown'.<sup>43</sup> He concludes by arguing that 'The rise of provincial schools of literature, interpreting local life in local idiom in all parts of the British Isles and in the Britain beyond the seas, is a goal worth striving for'.<sup>44</sup> This was a case for a form of cultural federalism. But the very use of the term 'provincial' implies the existence of a strong centre, occupied by a universal, de-regionalised culture. Also, Moorman's avowed aim to inculcate a dialect-based poetic and dramatic culture among Yorkshire's 'peasants and artisans', and his repeated assertions that such people would and could not respond to high literary culture bestows a highly patronising dimension upon his work.

In August 1916 Moorman reviewed an anthology of poems published by the Calder Valley Poets Society. This organisation had begun, according to the editor of the anthology, when a small group of 'mill hands, cotton and woollen grew accustomed to meeting one another on Saturday afternoons and holiday times, in the fields and woods of the Calder Valley'. The numbers joining these nature rambles grew and 'they wrote verses, not with any intention of shewing them to their tramping comrades, or to anybody else, but just to treasure them up and read them occasional privately to themselves'.<sup>45</sup> These qualms were eventually overcome and members of the CVPS began to venture into print.<sup>46</sup> The 1916 anthology provides biographies of most of the 23 contributors and is therefore an interesting guide to amateur Yorkshire literary culture at this period. There are some factory workers and tradespeople among the poets, but also teachers and clergymen. The outbreak of war meant that many of the contributions to the anthology adopted a patriotic tone, quite virulent on occasions.<sup>47</sup> But aside from this aspect, most of these poets chose to embrace what Brian Maidment has identified as a Parnassian mode, 'an endeavour on their authors' part to step beyond the cultural constraints of working-class life into a more ambitious, even universal and trans-historical poetic discourse'.<sup>48</sup> This tendency did not meet with the approval of Professor Moorman. When he reviewed the Calder Valley Poets anthology, Moorman attempted to be encouraging, but not could let his well-developed critical faculties remain dormant. 'The quality of verse in these pages never rises very high but it has the ring of sincerity to it... The authors of these poems cannot claim to have

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43 Moorman, *Songs of the Ridings*, p.5.

44 Ibid., p.19.

45 Sam Mellor (ed.), *Biographies, Sketches and Rhymes by the Calder Valley Poets* (Halifax: Edward Mortimer, 1916), p.3.

46 In addition to their 1916 anthology, the Calder Valley Poets also published a journal named *The Parnassian*, the final edition of which appeared in 1986. In 1916, the Yorkshire literary entrepreneur Charles F. Forshaw instigated an International Institute of Poetry, with premises in Peel Square, Bradford. After Forshaw's death in 1917, the Calder Valley Poets took over this organisation and subsequently the body's full title became the International Institute of British Poetry and the Calder Valley Poets Society.

47 The doyen of the Calder Valley Poets was the septuagenarian Sam Mellor, whose contributions to the anthology – which he edited – included 'In Memory of Nurse Cavell' and 'The Soldier-Mother's Ballad'.

48 Brian Maidment, *The Poorhouse Fugitives: Self-Taught Poets and Poetry in Victorian Britain* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1987), pp. 97-137.

enriched the spiritual life of the nation by new and original thoughts; it is even doubtful whether they can be said to have done much to widen the horizon of poetry’.

He acknowledged that ‘the atmosphere of the poems is unmistakably that of the West Riding’ and in expanding on this he provided a useful appraisal of sub-regional Yorkshire identity and character at the period:

We move amid a land of dales and moors and crags, a land of mechanics’ institutes, non-conformist chapels and among a people who conceal an intensely sentimental nature beneath a mask of indifference.<sup>49</sup>

Then he added a caveat:

The impression that an outsider might gain... would be that the Calder Valley is a purely rural district, a land of secluded dells where no sounds are heard but the voices of nature... we know how different this is from reality. The truth is that scarcely one of these twenty-three poets has sought themes for poetic handling in the everyday life of what is perhaps the most industrial valley in England, Millworkers to a man, they turned their backs on the factory and sought inspiration in nature or religion. This is certainly to be regretted. The raw material of poetry is to be found in the factory as well as in the moorland... It is in the life of industrial England, with its furnace glare, the throbbing looms and the busy throng of workers that the new poetry of humanity will be discovered and brought to life.<sup>50</sup>

Moorman thus detected in the work of the Calder Valley Poets an attempted denial of industrialisation which was a feature of much Yorkshire regional fiction at this period. It can also be found in other poetry anthologies, such as *Yorkshire Poets Past and Present*, which Charles F. Forshaw, of Bradford, began to issue as a part work in 1888. The accompanying biographies of the poets provide interesting evidence of the autodidactic literary culture among the working and middle classes of Victorian Yorkshire, including the mechanics of a regional literary career, which almost invariably began with publication in local newspapers. But the actual poems are overwhelmingly pastoral and mostly deregional in style. For example, a blacksmith, John Emsley, described as ‘a talented working man poet’ equipped with ‘the genius of a Burns’ is represented by a rather anaemic ode entitled *To a Rosebud*.<sup>51</sup> Moorman would have preferred him to write about daily life in the smithy, and perhaps do so in dialect. But Emsley, in common with most of his fellow Yorkshire poets, preferred to take the ‘Parnassian’ route.

Of course, poems of social comment, critical of the effects of industrialisation and of inequalities of wealth, were written in Victorian and Edwardian Yorkshire. Dialect almanac writers such as John Hartley and James Burnley frequently inserted such material into their publications. Hartley’s ‘Bite Bigger’ and Ben Preston’s ‘Ah Nivver Can Call Her My Wife’ – both of which deal with the effects of poverty – were two of the most widely known, recited and anthologised Yorkshire poems of the period. They both appear in Moorman’s *Yorkshire Dialect Poems*. Pastoral poetry was far more common, however, and dominated anthologies such as William Andrews’s *Modern Yorkshire Poets* of 1885, Forshaw’s *Yorkshire Poets Past and Present* series in the 1880s and 90s and the *Calder Valley Poets* collection in 1916. In the last-named publication, one of the illustrations is a photograph of four of the poets surrounded by foliage rather than a backdrop of textile mills [Figure 2].

Although this tendency can be regarded as an escapist failure to confront the reality of

49 F.W. Moorman, review of Calder Valley Poets anthology, *Yorkshire Post*, 9 August 1916.

50 Ibid.

51 Charles F. Forshaw (ed.), *Yorkshire Poets Past and Present*, Vol I (Bradford: T.Brear, 1888), p.108.



modern Yorkshire, it can also be argued that an important characteristic even of the heavily industrialised West Riding is the close proximity of town and country. This theme is encapsulated by Phyllis Bentley's argument that one of the factors which made the West Riding an ideal location for fiction was its 'teeming population ... moving to the constant hum of machinery against a superb background of wild moors and massive hills'.<sup>52</sup> In his commentary on the Calder Valley Poets, Moorman described their environment as 'perhaps the most industrial valley in England'. That might have been true – Moorman knew the area, having lectured on 'Broad Yorkshire' to Hebden Bridge Literary Society in February 1916 – but it was also true that Hardcastle Crag, within easy walking distance of the town, had been a popular beauty spot and excursion destination since the 1880s. A guidebook described it as 'one of the most beautiful and romantic places' in the North of England'.<sup>53</sup> Purple prose designed to attract tourists is not the most rigorous of evidence but it does help to make the point that for working-class and autodidact poets in Yorkshire, pastoralism, however banal when it emerged in verse form, was not alien to their experience. It was on their doorstep. The urban-rural nexus is a distinctive element of Yorkshire identity and Moorman's strictures against poetic pastoralism might have been justified in literary terms but were not entirely deserved thematically. His own anthology included the Normanton engine driver Walter Hampson's poem in which he describes his Yorkshire home in 'Owd England'



**Figure 2:** Members of the Calder Valley Poets, photographed amidst foliage. From the 1916 anthology.

*An' net far away there's green valleys,  
An' great craggy, towerin' hills,  
An' breezes at mingle their sweetness  
Wi' t' music o' sparklin' rills;  
An' meadows all decked wi' wild-flaars,  
An' hedges wi' blossom all white,  
An' a blue sky where t' skylark is singin',  
Just to mak known his joy an' delight'.<sup>54</sup>*

Professor Frederic Moorman's premature death cut short his project for indigenous Yorkshire cultural expression, although it had some after-life. His sequence of *Tales*, *Plays* and *Songs of the Ridings* enjoyed a creditable circulation. The *Tales* and *Songs* went into second editions and all the books were widely stocked by libraries in the county.<sup>55</sup> There

<sup>52</sup> Bentley, 'Yorkshire as a Novelist's County'.

<sup>53</sup> *Guide to Hardcastle Crag, Hebden Bridge and Neighbourhood* (Hebden Bridge: Moss Printers, 1894), p.45.

<sup>54</sup> Hampson, v.5 of 'Owd England', in Moorman (ed.), *Yorkshire Dialect Poems*, p.93.

<sup>55</sup> All or most of the Yorkshire dialect works compiled or written by Moorman remain available in the

is little evidence that Moorman's plays were performed by the 'artisans and peasants' at which they were aimed, although his dairies record Leeds University student performances of 'Potter Thompson' in 1914. On New Year's Eve 1931, 'The Ewe Lamb' was performed on radio by the BBC North and Midlands Region.<sup>56</sup> The story 'Throp's Wife', from *Tales of the Ridings*, was one of two Northern Dialect Stories broadcast by the BBC on 3 October 1938. The Yorkshire-born musician Arthur Wood (1875-1953), a successful composer of musical comedies for the London stage, made settings of three of the *Songs of the Ridings*, published in 1919.<sup>57</sup> In the 1960s, 'The Dalesman's Litany' was set to a modal melody by the Bradford musician Dave Keddle and recorded by some leading folk performers of the period.<sup>58</sup> The sleeve note to Tim Hart and Maddie Prior's 1968 recording stated that, 'The words of this song were collected by F.W. Moorman who was president of the Yorkshire Dialect Society during the latter part of the 19th century'.<sup>59</sup> There were three inaccuracies in that statement, but at least one of Moorman's verses had made its way into the vernacular tradition.

## Conclusion

Frederic Moorman remains a marginal literary figure, but he occupies a significant, possibly unique position as an outsider who encountered, absorbed, studied and contributed to Yorkshire's literary and vernacular culture, conceiving an idealistic project to propagate its regional identity. Moorman called himself a 'naturalised Yorkshireman' and committed himself to the county but also believed that his educational and social status precluded a full adoption of its regional identity. Yorkshireness, he believed, could only really belong to 'peasants and artisans'. But he would furnish them with raw material for the celebration of their identity.

His ideas were conceived during the early years of the twentieth century, but most of Moorman's Yorkshire dialect material was published during the First World War, and it was a useful exercise to take the periodisation of this thesis to 1918, as a demonstration of the resilience of regional identities during a period of crisis. Despite the inevitable nationalising tendencies of 1914-18, regional and national identities could remain distinct but compatible. Moorman's poem 'The New Englishman' depicted a working-class Yorkshireman discovering his national identity as a result of the war, but there is no sense

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public libraries of Bradford, Leeds, Halifax, Kirklees, Wakefield, North Yorkshire, Barnsley, Sheffield and Hull, all of them run now by the successor authorities to those that would have originally acquired the books. Alone among significant Yorkshire or ex-Yorkshire libraries, Middlesbrough does not have Moorman's works, which provides a grain of evidence that this city did not feel a strong sense of Yorkshire identity in the early-twentieth century.

56 For the development of regional broadcasting and the controversies surrounding it, see Asa Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*, Vol 1 (London: Blackwell, 1991).

57 Born in Heckmondwike, Wood wrote a number of light music compositions reflecting his Yorkshire origins. One of these, 'Barwick Green', the finale of a suite entitled 'My Native Heath', became well-known as the theme tune for BBC Radio's 'The Archers' – see Philip L Scowroft, 'A Yorkshire Musician' [<http://www.musicweb-international.com/garlands/wood.htm>, accessed 6 August 2011].

58 Tim Hart and Maddie Prior, *Folk Songs of Old England Vol 1* (1968) and Dave Burland, *A Dalesman's Litany* (1971).

59 <http://www.informatik.uni-hamburg.de/~zierke/steeleye.span/songs/thedalesmanslitany.html> [accessed Feb 2, 2010].

that he would shrug off his Yorkshireness at the same time. It has also been shown that Yorkshire vernacular writers and poets were quick to deploy their uncompromising dialect in the war of words with Germany.

Moorman had a pan-Yorkshire vision but tailored his poems and stories to the industrial and social conditions of contrasting parts of the county, an acknowledgment of the heterogeneity of Yorkshire, but also that it could be unified as part of a cultural whole.

# Conclusions

THE burgeoning print culture of the late-nineteenth century aided the nationalisation of English culture, by creating, for example, a nationwide audience and market for deregionalised forms of entertainment, sporting contests and commodities. But, in a parallel process, the same forms of media could also play a role in retaining and refining regional English identities and cultures, projecting them inwardly and outwardly. Advances in technology and distribution and the final repeal of the ‘taxes on knowledge’ allowed and encouraged the widespread publication of local and regional newspapers, periodicals and culturally-specific productions such as the dialect almanacs of Yorkshire. There was also an exponential increase in the publication of regional fiction – some of it aimed at a nationwide audience that was consequently made increasingly aware of the diversity of the country, and some of it intended for a more localised readership which could use the material as a reinforcement of its identity.

The high-water mark for the publication of regional periodicals and specialist dialect literature had been reached by the 1890s and began to fall back. This can be taken as evidence that the nostalgia inherent in publications such as dialect almanacs, for example, did not fit well with the ‘present-mindedness’ of the *fin-de-siècle* period, and that the 1890s were indeed the years in which, as conventionally asserted, the nationalisation of culture began fully to exert itself. This suggests that the ability of regional literary production to act as a countervailing force to deregionalised homogeneity had diminished considerably, especially as this was also the period in which the British Empire, and with it a sense of British race patriotism, reached its apogee. However, it is still possible to identify late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century movements and impulses that sought to preserve and project regional, usually county-based English identities.

It is telling, for example, that the late-1880s and the 1890s saw an abrupt rise in county societies in London and the overseas empire. In the capital, these societies – often consciously based on seventeenth-century forbears – enabled their members to celebrate regional origins and differentiate themselves from the metropolitan mass. The predecessors of these societies had been organisations of London-based gentry, but the late-Victorian societies, while patronised by the elite, had a backbone of middle-class membership, which demonstrates that county identity had by then flowed down the social scale. When formed overseas, in colonies and dominions, county societies were an opportunity for English émigrés to retain a specific identity. The absence of a fully-negotiated Englishness meant county origin and custom, with appropriate linguistic, visual and alimentary symbolism, were selected by many as the best way to sub-divide their identity in the wider British world.

There was no political dimension to this. The retention and celebration of an English regional or county identity was not an act of defiance in the face of over-arching Englishness or Britishness. All of these identities were fully compatible and could be produced and celebrated when appropriate. This suggests that British identity was more a mosaic than a smoothly-finished painting.



The conceptual arc of this thesis, then, has been an attempt to illustrate and to analyse some of the ways in which later-nineteenth century populist literary production and association could be used – explicitly or implicitly – to retain or refine regional identity at a time of dramatically improved communications. The county of Yorkshire, with one of the most vivid identities in England, was used as a case study and a more specific aim of the thesis has been to investigate the origins and evolution of some of the key Yorkshire stereotypes. Originating in the late-medieval or the early-modern period and often devised exogenously as expressions of fear and contempt, many of the tropes of Yorkshireness involved moral nihilism and selfishness. A tradition of hospitality acted as something of a corrective to these supposed traits, but even the more negative characteristics attributed to Yorkshire people were taken up with enthusiasm within the county itself, so that the concept of the ‘Yorkshire bite’ – in its original meaning of a confidence trick or turning of the tables – could be celebrated, alongside a ‘Yorkshireman’s Coat of Arms’ intended as a satire on the county but adopted as a widely-used emblem within it.

These stereotypes were initially attached to the people of pre-industrial, rural Yorkshire, but they accompanied intra-county migration to the newly-industrialised towns and cities of the West Riding, so that the old notions of Yorkshireness survived and prospered, to be disseminated widely in print and ephemera during the later-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. They still have purchase in the present day. The Yorkshireness of the dialect postcards, and the generally light-hearted dialect almanacs was essentially a humorous construct, although this does diminish its role in identity formation. More earnest attempts to preserve and promulgate Yorkshire regional culture, based on dialect speech, can be found in such movements as the Yorkshire Dialect Society and the literary projects of Professor F.W. Moorman. These were somewhat hegemonic in nature but there are clear signs of a trans-class Yorkshire identity, with evidence that dialect material, for example, had a readership across fairly wide socio-economic strata, so that it can be seen as an assertion of a shared regional identity. There are also signs that the upper class felt or were admitted to this populist sense of Yorkshireness, as the episode of the Lord Hawke testimonial helps to illustrate.

A similar project to this thesis could be conducted for other English counties and regions that have a historically-strong cultural identity, and similar findings would probably emerge. But despite its size and its economic, social, topographical and dialectal heterogeneity, Yorkshire proves to an ideal candidate for an investigation of the retention and indeed development of English regional stereotypes and their survival in a new age of popular print and rapid improvements in travel and communication.

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